FOR A LITERARY LEND-LEASE . . . By Struthers Burt

NOV 9 '44

THE Saturday Review OF LITERATURE

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VOLUME XXVII No. 45 NEW YORK, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1944 FIFTEEN CENTS

"A BASIC HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES"
by Charles A. Beard and Mary R. Beard
Reviewed by Dixon Wecter

"THE COTTON MILL WORKER"
by Herbert J. Lahne
Reviewed by Manya Gordon

"THE BOOK OF MARGERY KEMPE"
by W. Butler Bowron
Reviewed by Leonard Bacon

"MEN AND SAINTS"
by Charles Péguy
Reviewed by Paul Rosenfeld

"WHAT THE NEGRO WANTS"
edited by Rayford W. Logan
Reviewed by H. A. Overstreet

STRICTLY PERSONAL
by Thomas Sugrue

—Drawing by Emmanuel Levy

HOWARD SPRING'S new novel, "Hard Facts," is "not to be improved upon." (See page 5)

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—*Philadelphia Inquirer*

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THE NAME IS *Corwin . . .*

IT WAS one of those afternoons. And then the office page girl dropped something heavy on our tired desk and went out before we could stop her. We groaned. Our desk is always breathlessly cluttered, and this package was at least two feet square and about a foot thick. Reluctantly, we began to untie it. But as we pulled apart the wrapping our mood changed. It was suddenly less like the aftermath of the hurricane and a lot more like Christmas morning.

The package turned out to be a manuscript, rather impressively bound in buckram. On the back, stamped in gold, were the words: COLUMBIA PRESENTS CORWIN, 1944. Inside were the original production manuscripts of twenty-odd radio plays by Norman Corwin—the ones we had all heard . . . *Untitled, The Long Name None Could Spell, Savage Encounter, New York, There Will Be Time Later* and all the others he has done recently . . . dramas, fantasies, radio cantatas, comedies, satires, literary rhapsodies. Here was the makings of a really fine book for our 1945 list. (Publishers are generally living in the future and paying for the past. But in Norman Corwin's case, the past is as good to contemplate as the future.)

We remembered back to a time some eight years ago when we were sitting in the downstairs room of *Louis and Armand's* on 52nd Street. The man we were with jerked his head at a table across the way: "There's the most promising guy in radio," he observed. "Fella by the name of Corwin."

The face was young, remarkably alive and interesting. "So?" we asked. "What does he do?"

"He runs a poetry program."

"Oh, God," we said. "Oh, *Montreal*. Not that!"

Our friend—and he was a True Friend as Bertie Wooster would have put it—insisted. "Corwin can write. He can write literature for the radio. Consistently. Not just once in a while, for art's sake."

We never forgot that prophecy because, unlike most prophecies, it came true. Radio is no longer in its infancy. It has been a major part of American life for more than twenty years. And in all that time, for our money, it has produced only one writer that it can call its own, though it has borrowed the services of many, from *Archibald MacLeish* and *Stephen Benét* on down.

That one writer is *Norman Corwin*.

The word "writer" is used advisedly. Corwin likes to think of himself as an orchestrator of the three elements that go to make up a successful radio show—sound, music, and speech. But he is fundamentally a writer, and the proof of that is to be found in the two books of his which we have already published, THIRTEEN BY CORWIN (1942) and MORE BY CORWIN (1944). The twenty-nine dramas in those two books are superb reading, even without the music and the sound. *Orson Welles*, another young man of promise, once observed that "of all writers, Corwin has brought the most to the medium of radio." And *Carl Van Doren* declared, "He is to American radio what *Marlowe* was to the Elizabethan stage."

We thought of these things as we began to go through the new manuscript to select the pieces which belong in the new book. Some of them, we are happy to report, are better than anything he has ever done. Why has radio produced Norman Corwin? Our conclusion is that radio is lucky. It has enlisted a man who is a noble writer in any medium, a man with wit, irony, tenderness, deep sympathies, a man who is alive to this world of ours and stimulated by it. What such a man writes is always good reading, whether originally intended for the ear, like the great classic epics, or for the reading eye of modern man. Our friend in *Louis and Armand's* was right. We only wish we had more such friends. And to him we owe the special pleasure of being able to announce that our list for next year will contain the third, and newest, collection of published Corwin radio plays. Meanwhile, the first two are still available at $3.00 per volume, and well worth it.

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Preface by Clifton Fadiman

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The Saturday Review of Literature

For A Literary Lend-Lease

Proposing a Pool of American and English Literary Secrets

STRUTHERS BURT

THE English can indeed write novels. Novels and lyric poetry are the especial forte, the metier, the innermost and most natural expression of the strange, paradoxical, greatly mixed, but definitely amalgamated, nation which inhabits the narrow but infinitely varied confines of the British Isles. Considering what they are, one would call them a "race," had not the word fallen into disrepute and been made a monkey of by the Germans. Anyway, race or nation, the British—South English, North English, Scotch, Welsh, Irish, and I trust the Irish will forgive me for calling them British in this connection—can indeed write novels, and also poetry, with the indefinable but, as Housman defined it, "hair-raising" nightingale release.

The English gift for lyric poetry is easier to understand, for lyric poetry, like the sonnet, is pent-up passion poured into the smallness of a crystal container. Or, to change the metaphor, is dynamite compressed within a bomb. And no one will ever understand the English unless he starts with the knowledge that they are the most passionate of people but, like the nightingale, shy and given to living in thickets. An inherent talent for novel writing, however, is something else, for a novel is the widest, most all-embracing, most human and humane form of expression. Suddenly the shy nightingales begin to chatter amiably like jackdaws.

Subtle, all this, as I have said, and requiring manifold detailed explanation, that is, if one were to attempt to set down what conditions of soil and air, of inheritance, of tradition, of mixed blood but common accepted custom have made the English. But not so subtle if one confines himself to obvious surface manifestations. And these surface manifestations, it seems to me, are three, and so constant that one feels that almost any educated Englishman or -woman, given the inclination, can turn out a workmanlike and accomplished long piece of fiction.

It might be well for American novelists to take note of them, for the Americans, for all their virtues, lack exactly what the English have, just as the English, nowadays, lack exactly what the Americans have. The Americans have something to say, and continue to say it badly; the English —at least, for the present—have little to say, and continue to say it beautifully. The novelists of the two nations should hold a conference and exchange secrets—perhaps a sort of lend-lease working both ways. The Americans are writing more important novels—if you can call them that; the English keep on writing better ones. The restless, agonizedly impatient, and aspiring American mind is in pursuit of something bitterly essential. It is questioning every relationship of life, but meanwhile it has not accepted certain ineluctable facts. Certain ineluctable facts, that is, where novel writing is concerned. The recent questionnaire in this excellent magazine is proof of American thinking on the subject.

Sinclair Lewis is a magnificent pamphleteer, prophet, scourge, even, along a narrow trail, philosopher, also he is an artist—you can say almost anything you wish in praise—but he never wrote but one novel in his life, "Arrowsmith." The same, with differences, is true of Miss Cather. She is an exquisite artist, but all her novels are merely beautifully elongated short stories. While as for the winner of the contest, Ernest Hemingway, he too is a great artist, but a short story writer, not a novelist. A novel is something else. And so far as I am concerned, I can think of only two Americans since the last war who have exhibited the peculiar stripes of this breed of cats: Thomas Wolfe, now dead, and John Marquand, when he is at his most patient.

AND what are the stripes? The markings that the English, even at their worst, have? Three accepted premises, and I think they are unconscious and inherent. And the first is a belief in and a love of their language. A pride in the sweet and moving and lark-like tongue which is common both to the English and ourselves. A pride in it, and a passion and searching for its proper use, and a cunning knowledge of the power of words, and of how their aura spreads out endlessly. No Englishman,

—By Anthony Gross from "War Pictures by British Artists."

English recruits waiting in reception room.

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however erudite, can take a good degree at an English university unless he can use well his mother speech. No Englishman can achieve the ultimate prizes of life unless he can do the same. The Englishman is not afraid of language. He knows that words, whether in war, or love, or ordinary intercourse, are swift as arrows and strong as swords. That is why Mr. Churchill has been able to stir all men who speak English, including Americans, in a way no American can possibly do. The American, even the American writer, is fearful of words lest, if he use them too well, he be thought undemocratic. In what other country in the world do supposedly educated readers take pride in telling writers that they "liked this book, or that, of theirs, but couldn't understand half the words used"? And they say it with bland assumption, not shame, and they say it repeatedly.

The vocabulary of the average American businessman, outside of profanity and pornography, is about a thousand words, or the equivalent of the vocabulary of a Devonshire peasant. The more popular American magazines search fervently for stories "with emotional content." The "emotional content" is presented in the language of a backward child of eleven.

So that is the first reason why the average of English novels, just as novels, is so high. And the second reason is similar, for it also stems from a love and a pride.

A love and a pride, come foul weather or fair, for England and for English soil. The Englishman is haunted by English sights and sounds and smells; and if these are good, he delights in them, and if they are bad, he deprecates them and is determined to change them, but tenderly and patiently and good-humoredly, in the way you would attempt to change what seem to you the vices of someone whom you adore. The Englishman knows that England is an entity apart from the particular generations at the moment inhabiting it. It is that generation—for the moment—but it is also all English history and all possible English future to be. It is like a wife, who is her husband, but is also her own especial inheritance and each new moment of each new day is something else, and something more. After one has finished the average American novel, one has only a sense of loss, plus the conviction that whatever the author may like, it is not his own country. Now, I do not believe that that is the way American novelists feel, but most certainly that is the way they write.

The breath-taking beauty of America, magnificent or gentle and enclosed, is never there, nor the small and tender ways of Americans who, whatever else may be said of them, are among the most sensitive and thoughtful of peoples. The characters in American novels move in a bright vacuum of self-inspection, with no countryside back of them, hardly any city streets, few houses, and very little furniture. They neither smell, taste, see, nor hear, and if they have any human senses at all, it is the tactile one connected with an inexhaustible capacity for, and agility in, entering and leaving beds. And these noseless, mouthless, eyeless, earless characters are surrounded by gnome-like or monstrous fellow-citizens; friends, acquaintances, or relatives.

A fundamental necessity for any well-rounded novel is atmosphere. How can you have atmosphere if you have no sense of country, or locality, or of the detail of living? If you have no sense of the subtle layers and shadings, good, bad, and indifferent, that make a person? And if you lack these things, then, however good you are, you are writing a tract and not a novel.

And with that, we come to the third and most important qualification of all.

Arnold Bennett said that the entire secret of a novel was "character." In other words, a novel is the history of a group of people, various, odd, lovable, hateful, moving through a certain designated period of time. And each person in this group is composed of a myriad cells unduplicated, in their especial combination, by any other individual who has lived or ever will live. The Englishman agrees to this, and likes it, and does not want it changed. Were he an American, he would admit that even a reactionary Republican multi-millionaire Presbyterian textile manufacturer had his place in the artistic scheme of things and even his moments of pathos and dignity, such as birth, death, and marriage. One of the finest of recent American books, although by no means a novel, to the contrary, a political tract, had as its title some lovely words of John Donne. It is significant that the words were written by an Englishman and the book by an American. To the American "the bell tolls" only for those who agree with him politically and socially. Everyone else is a symbol, and a grotesque one, without viscera. The very "boobs" of Mr. Mencken are the incredible heroes of this war and the last one.

—"Wings"

The American with his impatience for perfection and his unmellowed itch to have everything bright and shining, becomes angry with his characters—cruel and ruthless; the Englishman is willing to accept them as they are. He studies them objectively, feels a little sorry for most of them, is inclined to leave judgment and condemnation to the reader. The result is something like real life.

So English novels have a sense of language and of atmosphere and of character, and those are three of the four essentials of a novel. If modern English novels had the fourth essential, as had the great Victorians and Edwardians, they would continue to be magnificent. Unfortunately, they haven't. With every gift of the good fairies but one, contemporary English novelists seem to be wandering in a dimming mist of indirection. They write exquisitely about nothing.

And that is how I feel about Howard Spring's latest book, "Hard Facts." * It is a beautiful piece of work; it is a most excellent novel. In it is characterization after characterization, large and small, description after description, page after page, not to be improved upon. There are some thirty pages, for instance, describing an English midsummer night, and lime trees, and a young man and a young woman, and the death of an old, and rather horrid, Englishman, that are as beautiful writing in every way as I have come across in a long while. But when you finish the book, the only possible question is the rude one, "And so what?"

Too bad, isn't it, that two nations speaking the same language and thinking more or less the same things cannot discard their vices and, learning from each other, combine their virtues to enter at last upon an artistic renascence as shining as that of the Greeks or the Medici?

*HARD FACTS. By Howard Spring. New York: The Viking Press. 1944. 283 pp. $2.50.

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A Farewell to the Republic

A BASIC HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES. By Charles A. Beard and Mary R. Beard. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1944. 554 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by DIXON WECTER

FOR some forty years the name of the Beards has been a hallmark of thoughtful interpretation in modern history, economics, and politics. With quiet purpose and integrity, illuminated by flashes of irony or dry humor, they have recorded in many books their view of American life, and the motives that underlie its passing show. By their own statement, this "Basic History" brings to a close these coöperative efforts. One would like to hail it as the copestone of their distinguished career, but to do so would be exaggeration. The book is able and workmanlike, but routine. Perhaps the self-imposed limitation of space bars the richness of detail, comment, and creative imagination needed to lift this book out of the category of another textbook. In its cheaper edition in The New Home Library, even more than in this edition, it will serve a worthy purpose in adult education, among an increasing public for whom the label of Beard offers an attractive invitation to learning. Nevertheless, it lacks the vivacity and powerful sweep of "The Rise of American Civilization," undoubtedly the Beards' masterpiece for the general reader; while Charles Beard's early "Economic Interpretation of the Constitution" still looms as his most significant book in blazing trails for a whole generation of historians. In fact, that book must rank with Frederick Jackson Turner's first essay on the frontier as pivotal in the writing of our history.

Any elder friend or enemy of the Beards who opens this book expecting to find the economic interpretation of history running as the golden thread, or the red Marxist skein, through the whole design, will have his preconceptions dashed. Since those stormy days after the publication in 1913 of Professor Beard's book on the Constitution, both author and public have gradually changed. Following the age of debunkery in American history and biography—which by pointing out Washington's speculative interest in Western lands, and Grant's disasters among the Wall Street bucket-shops, ventured somewhat unfairly to claim Beard as its sire—and those subsequent years of critical thunder on the Left, Beard's discovery that the Founding Fathers were men of property seems now a heresy mild as milk. On the other hand, Beard himself reveals at many points—in last year's "The Republic" as well as the "Basic History"—his ripe conviction that ideas are probably as vital as property interests in shaping man's behavior. Over many a public issue the citizen may not even know where his shrewdest self-interest lies, but he is almost never free from the compulsion of those emotion-tinged concepts which he carries about inside his head. Hence the importance which the Beards in this book attach to semantics—to the development of key words in an American context, like "republic," "democracy," "nation," "individualism," and perhaps their favorite word "civilization." Such analyses through a range of time help greatly to point up the meaning of American institutions, and in this field the Beards stand unexcelled.

Moreover, far from having lost respect for the Constitution—whose makers he once dissected, in quest of the pocketbook nerve—Professor Beard has come to accept this symbol of government with deep devotion. "The survival of constitutional government," under regimentation of the New Deal and of global war, is, according to the closing pages of the "Basic History," probably the gravest problem of our future—far transcending "shadowy plans for a world order and for enforcing the four freedoms throughout the world in the 'century of the common man'." In the Beards' eyes, constitutional government is a point of fixity in a world of centrifugal chaos and dangerous experiment. The Constitution is to Beard somewhat as the Catholic Church to Santayana, when rough and conflicting winds of doctrine blow the skeptic back to haven.

—From the book

Bargains in human flesh, from the painting by Joseph Boggs Beale.

"A Basic History" contains some strong chapters. In the world of Washington, Jefferson, and Monroe the Beards are probably at their best, because they feel most at home. Generally speaking, chronology is subordinate to topical structure in this book. The Beards' account of the social and intellectual growth of the Colonies, of the republican way of life, and of what the authors call "a broadening and deepening sense of civilization," are sound and discerning. Thanks in large measure to the Beards themselves, American history as it is written ceased some time ago to be a mere chronicle of battles, treaties, dates, and Presidentiads. Plainly enough, economic and social forces, problems agricultural and industrial, invention, education, and the growth of American thought, all these things interest the Beards far more than drums and trumpets. For a short general history this is as it should be—though for sheer readability this reviewer would rank the "Basic History" below introductions to the same field by Morison and Commager, Schlesinger, and Nevins and Commager.

Here and there the Beards, like all historians, give the hobby horse his head—for instance allotting generous space to feminism, but almost wholly forgetting to mention that equally significant American crusade, temperance. In praising Hoover for acting "energetically and creatively" to combat the Depression, while Democrats in Congress contented themselves mainly with "obstructing and harassing" him, the Beards credit him with two notable relief measures: the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, to assist banks, insurance companies, and the like, and secondly "the Home Owners' Loan Corporation to aid people in peril of losing their homes under foreclosure of mortgages." The R.F.C. rightly belongs to Hoover's sponsorship, but to keep the record straight one might remark that it was set up not during the Republican heyday in Congress, but by act of a prevailingly Democratic Congress in January, 1932. The H.O.L.C., however, was not created until June 13, 1933, being a New Deal agency from start to finish.

Of our participation in World Wars I and II one gathers that the Beards still take a poor view. Under the guise of opinions ascribed to "many Americans," "countless Americans," or "literate Americans," they reveal what seems to be their steadfast belief that in the international sphere we have been moral meddlers. Trying to have our cake and eat it too, we have generally wound up with only the belly-ache. Here one catches a last gleam of the old Beardian economic motive, in interpreting the last war doggedly

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in terms of the Merchants of Death and Mr. Morgan's chestnuts. Today this seems a little quaint. If Professor Beard in dealing with our earlier history is less sure than formerly that a man of property is a puppet moved by the profit motive, in our later history he is still convinced that every advocate of war is a warmonger. From the 1890's up to 1944, America's increasing role in world affairs is branded as imperialistic, darkening "the outlook for world peace." Both Republicans and Democrats, he believes, are to blame for a drift which he described in September, 1939, by the phrase "giddy minds and foreign quarrels." Of course Beard the liberal holds no brief for the Imperial Germany of 1914 or the Axis today. But, as he has avowed many times, hemispheric defense was good enough for Washington and Monroe, and is good enough for him. (One misses, among discussions of new technologies in the "Basic History," an analysis of the effect of air power upon America's foreign policy.)

In one respect, perhaps, the Beards have slightly shifted ground since the start of World War II. In "The Rise of American Civilization," penned in the high noon of "revisionism" (when the Beards called German guilt "a story for babes"), it was asserted that the election of 1920 was a popular referendum on the League, showing its rejection by the American people. Now, more prudently, they admit doubt as to what "the election returns of 1920 actually did imply, as a verdict for or against the League." At heart, however, they remain isolationists, certain that our leadership from 1937 to Pearl Harbor followed the same wilful road to war pursued by Wilson (an ambitious man, say the Beards, who about 1910 abruptly switched from conservation to liberalism because he sensed that tides of opinion were flowing that way). Here the partisan snatches the historian's pen.

And strangely enough the Beards report that this war, through the Alien Registration Act and other policies, has served to curb free speech and dangerously to infringe upon our liberties "for the first time" in the style of the European state-police system. In view of the tender treatment of defendants at the recent Sedition Trials, the scrupulous handling of conscientious objectors, and the testimony of the Civil Liberties Union that in these times they have virtually no bills of complaint, Professor Beard's alarm strikes one as exaggerated. Perhaps his experiences at the Columbia University of 1917 have left him with a lasting psychosis about free speech in wartime. Those who regard the present as the best-run war in American history—whether in military efficiency, calmer emotional tone, or respect for civil rights—will register dissent from his gloom.

Indeed, the lingering mood left by the latter pages of "A Basic History" is one of gentle despair. The Beards see the Great Republic—which they have loved long and sincerely, as only those who have given a lifetime of study can love it—moving darkly and inexorably toward greater centralization of government and more reckless waste of its vital energies and resources, until at last they join hands with Henry Adams in sensing its disintegration and doom. We are turning toward the second law of thermodynamics, as about us falls the hoar frost of the Ice Age. But perhaps theirs is only the pessimism of age, grieving at the erasure of old landmarks, the comfortable fit of habit, the disappearance of ancient horizons of home. To others, this sense of inevitable change may mean not sadness but challenge. The old Republic was good. But isn't it possible that we can make a still better one? Its Founders, in their time, were not unduly reverential of the past.

The Fight for Recognition

THE COTTON MILL WORKER. By Herbert J. Lahne. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1944. 278 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by MANYA GORDON

THIS is the fourth volume in the Labor in Twentieth Century America Series. It deals with our oldest industry in which machinery was employed from the very beginning and in which the first corporate enterprise appeared. The Boston Manufacturing Company was launched in 1813. Mr. Lahne describes the initial phases of the cotton industry in New England, its gradual extension to the South and other parts of the country, and its growth in output and number of wage earners.

On the human side it has been a tale of overseas expansion in reverse. First the cotton mills were staffed with native farm labor. These were succeeded by Irish workers. They in turn were followed by French Canadians, Portuguese, Greeks, Poles, Italians, Turks, Armenians, Scandanavians, Germans, Jews, Lithuanians; and as the mills moved so did the workers.

The mill owners were aware of the low standard of living to which the immigrants were accustomed and made every effort to keep them at that level. "The mill house and the company store were potent weapons in the industrial conflicts. The worker who lived in a mill house and traded in a company store found when a strike came that he was likely to be evicted from the mill house and his credit cut off at the company store."

Workers who dwelled in non-company houses were more independent and helped more readily in the unionization of the industry. This was in New England. In the Southern mill towns the employers owned everything: the dwellings that the workers lived in, the stores where they were compelled to trade, the schools their children attended when they were not wanted at the mills, the church where they were christened and married and from where they went to their final rest. Any trade union activity exposed the workers not only to all manner of privation but to the heavy hand of the state militia and other forms of intimidation. Mr. Lahne is rigidly objective; and he tells the mill owner's side of the story with rare fairness. For all that the picture which emerges of conditions in the Southern mill towns until very recently is more akin to feudalism than "paternalism."

The history of the unionization of the cotton mill workers is the real theme of the present volume. It is thoroughly documented and should be prescribed reading for all those who fear the power of organized labor and overlook or refuse to acknowledge the arbitrary power of industrial autocrats. At the same time the reader gets a very fair notion of the complexity of the industrial life of the country as a whole and the sensitive reaction of the cotton industry to changes in transportation or to general commercial and manufacturing

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conditions in New York or California.

But if this part of the book is written in a spirit of strict objectivity, in his treatment of the differences between the A. F. of L. and the C. I. O. the author is obviously partial to the latter. In his first chapter dealing with the hostility of the mill owners to any kind of trade union organization, he states that the National Labor Relations Act "has taken from the mill owners their most powerful weapon—the discriminatory discharges, which was accompanied by eviction from the mill-owned houses and the other pressures made available by the mill-village system," that is, complete company ownership of everything. "So long as this law remains effective, the unions have a fighting chance of reaching the workers to protect them against the competitive exploitation which has characterized the industry in the past."

Having acknowledged the importance of the National Labor Relations Act, Mr. Lahne proceeds to ascribe the increase in the trade union membership of the Southern cotton mill workers since 1933 to the wise leadership of the C. I. O. He gives too little credit to the N. R. A. and the N. L. R. B. and overstresses the C. I. O. formula of industrial organization as against the craft unionism of the A. F. of L. It is true that the C. I. O. helped to energize the trade union movement. It is equally true that without the labor legislation of the Roosevelt administration the C. I. O. would have been as helpless as the A. F. of L. In corroboration of this fact one need only recall Mr. Lahne's statement that the mill owners continue to ignore the labor laws wherever possible, but it is one thing to evade a law and quite another to be free to do as one likes.

In 1939 the two national trade union organizations succeeded in concluding collective bargaining contracts covering 235,000 workers in all branches of the textile industry; but in the cotton mills proper in 1941 the trade union membership in both craft and industrial unions was 131,000.

It is regrettable that Mr. Lahne's painstaking and comprehensive study of the trade union phase of the cotton industry does not include a chapter on the present general condition of the workers. Trade unionism is not an abstract theory. It should be related to the daily life of the workers. In the light of recent information outside of this volume the cotton mill workers have still to secure a subsistence wage.

This noteworthy study would be much more readable if the story were told consecutively instead of shuttling back and forth in time and space.

Not "Whodunit?" But "How?"

First Aid for Critics of the Detective Story

JACQUES BARZUN

MY friends keep telling me that "Agatha Christie has written a new one." They know that I like detective stories and they are surprised when I receive their announcement with a lack-lustre eye. To them, anything with a murder or a detective in it is detection, and nothing I can say in casual conversation can shake their belief. I have long thought I should put something down on paper and distribute copies in self-defense, but now that professional critics have taken up the confusion and made it their own, my half-formed intent becomes a duty.

It goes without saying that I make no claim but that of being an old hand.

The distinguished poets and sociologists who have recently given attention to the detective story do not need any help as interpreters; but I think they are still somewhat bewildered by the cluster of forms surrounding a genre which they are observing in its decline. Indeed, I should not be surprised if they were writing its obituary—perhaps without ever being acquainted with the subject while it was still alive. Do they remember the day when Dorothy Sayers made her brilliant debut with "Whose Body?" in 1923? If not, they are archeologists judging the greatness of Rome from the ruins of the Later Empire.

A detective story is a narrative of which the chief interest lies in the palpable process of detection. This sounds like tautology, which it is, and which proves that it is a correct definition. All error comes of forgetting what the definition does and does not imply. Detection does not imply murder, nor the presence of a character called a detective; and this in turn implies its converse, namely that a story containing murders and detectives is not necessarily a detective story—a story *of detection*. The unravelling of a mystery forms the basis of many agreeable works, but that again is not the point of the detective tale. The point is the unravelling of a physical mystery in a physical way by plausible inference. "Hamlet" and "The Moonstone" are great murder mysteries which I enjoy very much, but there is no real detection in them. Again, I have great regard for Rex Stout's Nero Wolfe novels and for the work of Dashiell Hammett, but genuine detection is foreign to both.

At this point I can imagine a reader having a great illumination and exclaiming, "Now I know what you're after: you want a logically constructed puzzle worked out with the aid of conventional puppets." This is another popular superstition, clothed in the language of polite abuse. The description would serve equally to damn the Greek tragedies, for like Greek tragedy detective fiction is the story of circumstance. (See the stray hairs and footprints in the "Choephoroe.") Only, as befits modern industrial culture, the detective story is circumstantial throughout. It is the Greek "recognition scene" made into an end in itself. Character drawing, local color, and literary effect form a legitimate part of detective fiction, but they must remain secondary to the business of coherently interpreting facts. In this, detection resembles science, jurisprudence, and natural theology.

All this is solemn enough, and true, but of course it is not what the connoisseur of detection thinks about while reading his favorite author. He is thinking rather of Theme and Variations. For detection is an art with a tradition which must be known to be appreciated. This knowledge includes a smattering of physical science and medicine, a strong sense of probability, and an extensive familiarity with the literature. One critic expressed surprise when I wrote that the readers of detection were like eighteenth-century dilettanti, and instanced the millions of inattentive gobblers of crime stories. Obviously, we were not talking about the same kind of book, the same kind of reader, or the same kind of pleasure.

Take the virtue of originality. The ordinary reader will accept any kind of mystery and any kind of key that seems to fit it. The dilettante on the contrary will consider whether the problem has been treated before and how it has been solved. Access to the victim, alibi, nature of crime, motive,

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method, and the possibility of tracing all these, are so many heads of judgment under which he will gauge the tale. If the "death chamber" is locked and barred, he remembers certain classics—Poe, Philpotts's "Grey Room," Carolyn Wells's "Feathers Left Around" —and will not tolerate their repetition. After "Have His Carcass" no alibi can depend on haemophilia. After "Fatal Descent" no criminal can enlist the aid of barometric pressure. After "Brookbend Cottage" high voltage is played out.

Do not let these examples suggest that what I call "real detection" is only another name for pedantry or a mere extension of the science textbooks. Detection does indeed mirror the age of applied science, but the "palpable process of detection" takes in much more than the main idea around which the particular story has grown. All the little unregarded details of daily life must be treasured up and used by the author as matters of interest and significance. That is why floor plans, maps, time tables, the habits of the deceased and of his butler are so perennially alluring. And the need for these, together with the background of science and industry, explains why most tales of detection are English in authorship and setting. Detection calls for a regulated life, sustained by servants, railroads, and respectability. In Henry Wade's "No Friendly Drop" the business of scalding the teapot was a brilliant illustration of what I mean. But it was only one of a dozen similar occurrences, combined to give several pleasures at once—that of a realistic novel, of a pseudo-scientific investigation, and of a suspensive plot involving the basic verities: life, liberty, and the pursuit of inheritance.

Perhaps it would be well if I indicated here the range of works that belong to the detective genre properly so called. Poe invented it; the French mixed it up badly with stories of passionate crime and legal procedure. (Trial scenes usually swamp detection.) Our own Anna Katherine Green did a good deal to restore the initial design, while Conan Doyle contributed more largely than anyone else to its enrichment. Then a second wave of talent swept over the field, just before and just after the First World War. It included E. C. Bentley, Arthur Morrison, Jacques Futrelle, the Baroness Orczy, Isabel Ostrander, Dorothy Sayers, J. J. Connington, T. L. Davison, John Rhode, Freeman Wills Crofts, R. Austin Freeman, A. A. Milne, Henry Wade, Victor Whitechurch, A. E. W. Mason, Margery Allingham, Ronald Knox, Miles Burton, Ernest Bramah, and G. D. H. and Margaret Cole.

Some may wonder why I leave out G. K. Chesterton. The reason is that the Father Brown stories, delightful as they are, contain very little detection. They are feats of divination and masterpieces of surprise, but the "palpable process" is virtually nil. Chesterton's other volume, "The Man Who Knew Too Much," comes closer to the true form. Next door to it and also outside the pale stand the novels of Agatha Christie, of David Frome-Leslie Ford, of S. S. Van Dine, of Simenon, and of a good many other able yarn spinners who borrow the atmosphere of detection while cheating us of the substance. I hope I may clinch the distinction by pointing out that Dorothy Sayers has written two different sorts of tales. In "Murder Must Advertise," "The Nine Tailors," and almost all the short stories, she has written *mystery* stories. In "Whose Body?", "Strong Poison," and the rest, she has written *detective* stories—and great ones at that. Now let us try an examination question: *Q.* Wouldn't it be wonderful for the detective-story writer if a poison were discovered which left no trace in the victim's body? *Ans.* No, you idiot, how could the detective detect something which is by hypothesis undetectable?

We can now somewhat expand our definition. A true detective story is one in which the ordinary routine of life in a contemporary setting is faithfully represented, and a notable disturbance—preferably exciting—tracked down to its source by means of tangible clues plausibly interpreted. Fifteen years ago Ronald Knox said all this in one profound First Law of Detection: "There must be no Chinamen." This means, of course, that the fantastic, the remote, and the occult are forbidden. Detection by "psychological means" is the bunk, and even human testimony soon palls. This does not mean that the interplay of character and the force of emotion are excluded. On the contrary, detection is the one realm where hate, greed, lust, and the grotesque are cherished growths. From Poe through Doyle to Sayers, the tradition of macabre humor is sacrosanct, precisely because detection is of the body and calls for symbols of the dance of death.

—From the portrait by Polly Thayer
Jacques Barzun

In truth, the shocking contrast between the order of a private life and its untoward interruption is one of the two great feelings generated by detective fiction. That is why the corpse in the library remains the fundamental theme. It is one degree more shocking than Shot on the Downs. But notice that the same contrast can exist without sudden death and is actually lessened by a surfeit of corpses. Strangeness is sufficient. "The Red-Headed League" is the great example of what I mean, infinitely above "The Speckled Band," which yields only the vulgar horrors of snakebite. That the sensation of contrast differs from the sensational can be seen, again, in Dermot Morrah's "Mummy Case Mystery" —a poor title for an enchanting tale of detection without murder, laid in Oxford and delicately charged with all the feelings proper to the genre.

I have said there are two great emotions aroused in a detective story. The one reaches its acme in the grotesque: the nude corpse of a vagrant is pushed through the window into an irrelevant bathtub ("Whose Body?"). The other emotion grows out of the first and is its resolution: by what process does the bathtub become relevant? Of this feeling, which must be sustained and renewed, Marjorie Nicholson wrote very pertinently years ago. It is not the thrill of the chase, nor trembling suspense, nor mere bepuzzlement. It is the thrill of the *Aufklärung*, the passion for demonstration. Just as a good ghost story—"The Monkey's Paw" or "The Mezzotint"—makes a cold shiver run down the spine, so does a soundly dramatic moment of detection. I can even feel it when Holmes merely hints at a chain of evidence: "It is glue, Watson, it is undoubtedly glue."

Of course, one senses also a comic overtone, but it is high comedy. Detective literature is a literature of make-believe, but it is make-believe that reports accurately on the limitations of space and time. Through detection a thousand objects take on new meaning, a thousand conventions come to life. The locked-and-barred room is only one problem. How about robbery on an ocean liner—the time fixed by dinner, the space defined by the deck-rail? What of the Body in the Silo (Ronald Knox)? Why not dream on the latent virtues of septic tanks, recording thermometers, and beach umbrellas? Holmes was concerned with

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the distance which the parsley had sunk into the butter on a hot day, and at another time he explained why the man who destroyed the plaster busts of Napoleon was not a "promiscuous iconoclast." Genius can make anything that is possible seem likely. For my part, I am still waiting for something which should be called, "The Stiff in the Skiff."

Well, no artistic possibilities are really endless and I think we in 1944 have reached the end. Each new writer of detection lasts a shorter time than the one before. Ngaio Marsh, who was brilliant as far as "Overture to Death," has gone into a wordy decline. Rhode, Connington, Wade, Bentley are through. Dorothy Sayers has given up. R. A. Freeman is dead, after a stretch of painful repetition. Crofts and the Coles are spinning along from habit. It is all over but the shouting, and that is taking the form of critical estimates of the genre as a whole. This is as it should be, but criticism lives by making distinctions, and it is desirable that critics should distinguish the detective story from the police thriller, the spy story, the story of gang warfare, the novel based on real crime, the tale of legal intrigue, and the newspaperman's battle against corruption. There are, as anyone can see, dozens of forms in which crime occurs and is discovered, but only one concerned with the palpable process of detection.

Let me add that in pointing out these differences I have not done an original thing. It so happens that I was reading detection when most present-day readers and critics were either indifferent or scornful; but I was not alone, as is shown by the sizable and lively literature on the subject. On any list of books about detection the first name, like Poe's, is American: Carolyn Wells's "Technique of the Mystery Story" first appeared in 1913. But the classic work—like Doyle's—is English: H. Douglas Thomson's "Masters of Mystery" was published (in England only) in 1931. In between, are to be found excellent essays by E. M. Wrong (World's Classics anthology of detection), Dorothy Sayers (in her several Omnibuses), Ronald Knox ("Best Detective Stories of 1929"), Christopher Morley ("Complete Sherlock Holmes"), and Chesterton (in "Generally Speaking"). Keep away, meanwhile, from the French historians of the *roman policier*. There is valuable matter in Régis Messac's big book and François Fosca's more manageable one, but it will lead you into damnable heresies until you are absolutely sure that you can tell a Holmes from a Hawkshaw.

The Saint and Hero

MEN AND SAINTS. Prose and Poetry by Charles Péguy. French-English Edition. Translation by Anne and Julian Green. New York: Pantheon Books. 1944. 303 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by PAUL ROSENFELD

THE moralist and poet, prophet and polemist, Charles Péguy, who died in the Battle of the Marne, was the author of a series of pamphlets which permit very naturally of being broken apart. Not that he was a fragmentist, as so many other moralists have been. His pamphlets are units, in instances beautifully firm ones. But they are units composed of brief pieces often most dissimilar in style and subject: narratives and invectives, essays and lyrics, bits of history, of literary criticism, of theology, of autobiography.

Curiously these pamphlets of his for all their relative sobriety and spirit of faith resemble Heine's "Salons," those famous "expositions" of extremely various, readily detachable pieces of criticism, fantasy, and lyricism. We say "curiously" for the reason that that "soldier of liberty," Péguy, whose education was entirely classical, probably never read the writings of that other "soldier of liberty," Heine.

Because of the form of his pamphlets, thoughtfully composed volumes of selections from Péguy such as those of Anne and Julian Green—"Basic Verities" of two years ago and "Men and Saints," its successor—represent his work faithfully and agreeably. "Basic Verities" in particular presented his condemnation of the opportunistic modern world. Without absolute values, he perceived—without the ability really to care for things—it was incapable of creation. "Men and Saints" mainly presents another, equally important activity of his imagination.

This activity was the single feeling with which he embraced two types of representative men who, as he himself declared, "stand in some inexpressibly deep contradiction:" the Saint and the Hero. For the object of the Saint's aspiration is the end of the world; that of the Hero's, its continuation. And Péguy not only celebrated with equal fervor the heroes of Corneille, Bernard-Lazare, the hero of the Dreyfus case, and St. Genevieve of Paris. The subject of his adoration was the girl who simultaneously became a heroine and a saint, Jeanne d'Arc. Significantly, all his effort was directed to the creation of a country which would gratify the desires of both types: a combination of the spiritual realm and the "sweet land of France" in a State that would "exist as an honest man"; in a society which would flourish in awareness of the presence of the divine Life.

One faces this feeling very directly in the little essay on Jeanne d'Arc which the Greens have extracted from one of his later pamphlets. One gathers it from the peculiar glow of the passages extracted from his portrait of that almost saintly hero, Bernard-Lazare; from the gladness of his pages on the "Affaire" in affirmation of the fact that it had been a mystical motive that impelled Dreyfus's first public defenders; from the manner of his discussion of the relation of contemporary Israel to its prophets. Finally we gather it from the passages drawn from his poetic trilogy on the girl of Domremy. Its subject was nothing but the education prerequisite to the twofold role she played.

Almost it seems as though, through this author as through some other artists—Beethoven for instance—Nature had been moving toward the union of two of her contradictory grand types, the saintly and the heroic. What is probable is that she had imbued Péguy, too, with something of the qualities of these types. Certainly there were more than evidences of saintliness and heroism in his pure life of courage and disinterested work. Behind his writings, too, along with the singing state of soul which makes the artist, we feel some of the spiritual jubilance and sorrowfulness which sometimes make the saint and seem to underlie his impatience with the world, and the passionate loyalty to mortal flesh which forms the hero. The hypothesis that Péguy himself was this sort of experiment of Nature's goes far to explain his work and its steadily increasing interest and influence.

The moment for the translation of some of his best-formed pamphlets, "Notre Patrie," for example, and "Notre Jeunesse," would seem not far away. Meanwhile, "Men and Saints" tempts us to call it the finer of the Greens' volumes of selections. The style of the translation besides is more harmonious than in "Basic Verities." And Péguy's prose appears on the handsomest page on which it has ever had the fortune to be presented.

Almanac Correction

Hermann Kesten is the author of the current biography of the great astronomer in "Copernicus and His World," published by Roy. In the Fall Book Number of October 14, the author's name was erroneously given as Rosten.

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A New Version of a Classic

THE BOOK OF MARGERY KEMPE, A Modern Version. By W. Butler Bowron. New York: The Devin-Adair Co. 1944. 237 *pp.* $3.75.

Reviewed by LEONARD BACON

THIS intensely interesting book should have been published in the United States with a blast of trumpets some years ago when the English edition first appeared. At that time it startled the natives in England and the reviewer cannot explain why a document of first-rate historical importance (it is quite literally the first extant autobiography to be written in English) and beyond that a psychological study of extreme curiosity, has been neglected so long in this country.

For "The Book of Margery Kempe" is the sort of pure gold that would have delighted William James. And whoever reads it with care will read it with excitement. Margery, perhaps, has not the dreadful poignancy of Bunyan in "Grace Abounding," but one thinks of her in the same breath and even the skeptical materialist is compelled to sympathize with such genuine tribulation of spirit. The way of "a religious enthusiast remaining in the world" (to quote a phrase from Professor Chambers's masterly introduction) is a thorny road. And the unfortunate Margery, as several reviewers have noticed, lacked the temper and the tact to make her convictions endurable to her neighbors.

The wife of a solid citizen of Lynne in Norfolk, whom she married in 1393 when Richard II was still King, she appears to have been a wealthy and worldly young matron with a taste for slashed headdresses and no particularly pronounced "religious talent." However, she went insane after the birth of one of her children and had to be forcibly constrained for what must have been a pretty awful year, during which "she rived the skin on her body against her heart with her nails spitefully," abused her family, and, like Bunyan, believed that she had denied her God. But our Lord appeared to her in a beatific vision, she recovered, and the slow process of her redemption began. There were vicissitudes before she escaped wholly from the world. Her failure in two business ventures, brewing and milling, stiffened her conviction as to her vocation. And presently she was fairly delivered to a life of pilgrimage and visionary "dalliance" with the whole hierarchy of Heaven.

She was suspected of being a Lollard, and perhaps her startling incapacity to get on with people may have been in part due to that suspicion. But in any case she would have been as hard to take in the first half of the fifteenth century as a Holy Roller in the first half of the twentieth century. Her "boisterous sobbings" at the mere mention of anything with the faintest religious connection were evidently weariness to the flesh of the full-blooded lusty children of the time Chaucer has taught us to understand in some degree. They gave pointed expression to their views, for, as she pathetically reports, "some of them said they would not go with her for a hundred pounds." And the book is full of her sufferings at the hands of the unregenerate, though now and again the score was evened by some child of light.

—From the jacket of the book

Her pilgrimages took her to Jerusalem, where Moslems, who evidently respected her "enthusiasm," as, we are told, the Orient is apt to do, treated her well. She also visited Rome and St. James of Compostella. And getting outside the beat of the Wife of Bath, she entered the world of Chaucer's Knight and voyaged in "Pruce." She got as far as Stralsund on the Baltic, coming back to civilization by way of Sachen. In the end, she returned an old woman to Norfolk, where she dictated her history to one who knew "neither Dutch nor English" and at length got it fairly copied and corrected by the sufficiently instructed. There seems to be no clear evidence that she herself could either read or write.

This doesn't mean that she was an ignoramus any more than Charlemagne was, who labored under the same handicap. On the contrary she seem to have had what must be described as a trained mind. The gigantic prayer with which the book ends, if it is her work which I believe it to be, would alone prove the point. Clearly, she had listened to Scripture as no one who can read ever listens. And this holds good for a lot of contemporary theology and mystical literature, to which last her own contribution is not insignificant. I do not see how it is possible to remain unmoved by the account of her "feelings" and her visions many of which must have come to her at the very time when archangels were speaking to a young woman of Lorraine under the oaks of Domremy. In those visions she moves in an unknown dimension. She is an actress in the Christian Tragedy with a part of her own. She sees the body of Christ, "fuller of wounds than ever was a dove-house of holes." Present at the crucifixion, she beholds ghastly details, as far as I know, not mentioned in any gospel. One has a burning sense that this is the first-hand report of an intelligent eye-witness. And it won't do to explain away such intense subjective reality. It is too moving.

Nor is one apt to be less moved by the reverse of the medal. Poor Margery is in perpetual agony lest these very visions be illusion and deception put upon her by the Prince of the power of the air. A delightful nun once quoted to me a remark to the effect that being a bride of Christ was not all roses. And Lucifer for at least one protracted period had his innings when he tormented Margery's unhappy mind with images equivalent to those which plagued Saint Anthony. The reader will not soon forget her account of how before her conversion she consented to be unfaithful to her husband, only to be rejected by a Lothario who lost his nerve. A lady with sufficient sincerity, humility, and courage to record such a brutal abuse of her womanhood has some pretensions to a place (even if it be only chronologically first) in the strange line of self-investigators. Beyond any doubt Pepys, Boswell, and Horace Walpole would welcome her to a society in which no sex is discriminated against.

The book known, prior to recent discovery, only in part because a few pages of it were printed by Wynkyn de Worde as the sixteenth century dawned, naturally takes its proper position as an English prose classic. It has a good deal more than historical interest, for it reveals with remarkable verve a character that excites the mind. The reviewer, for one, expects to remember the curious heroine, part saint, part incurably natural woman, full of self-forgetfulness, full of self-pity, and eager to expatiate on each. And he is in full agreement with another critic who, admitting that she must have been hard to live with, thought it port royal to read about her.

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Strictly Personal...

GOOD RATHER THAN JUST

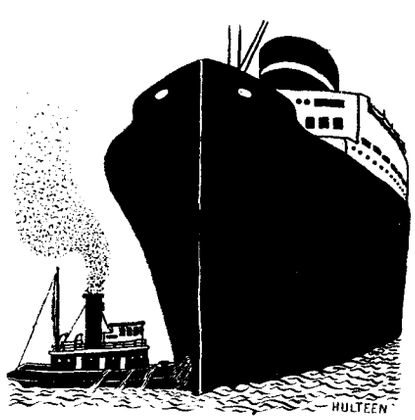
THE certainty which rises and takes form in the average human mind after it has journeyed through a stack of our current post-war plans, blueprints, guides, prophecies, horoscopes, and clarion calls, is pretty much the same certainty that rises and takes form in the same average human mind after a bout with Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," a session with the political history of Europe, or a hard night at the gaming tables in Miami, Fla. It is the certainty that man cannot be righteous; he can only be holy. It is the certainty which takes up the cynical statement of Ivan Fyodorovich in Dostoievsky's "The Brothers Karamazov," and repeats it solemnly—that the world's grief will cease when the state becomes the church; when mercy, not justice, is the law. For man cannot be just; he can only be good.

The church state, in its day, had no more luck with lasting peace than has the political state, since it represented, not an evolution of the people toward goodness, but a visitation upon them of the possessors of good—self-styled and self-appointed. The popes of the Holy Roman Empire were as unsuccessful at righteousness as were the cagey old frauds at Versailles in 1919, and naturally so. Righteousness depends on wisdom, and wisdom is a compound of knowledge and experience, gathered in patience and dispensed with objectivity. Man doesn't know enough, hasn't experienced enough, isn't patient enough, and is unable sufficiently to separate what he wants to do from what he ought to do, for righteousness to proceed from him. Solomon knew this; when the contending women brought him the child each claimed for her own, he ignored justice and invoked a holy thing—selfless love. Only a similar invocation will give hope to the post-war world. A state which is becoming a church, a state whose people have reached a point in their evolution where they regard Christianity as a desirable system of living instead of an unattainable and rather foolish ideal—such a state, if it existed, might keep the world from the abyss.

It is the nature of Americans in their external life, in their casual relations with people, to be good rather than just, to be—though they would dislike the term—holy rather than righteous. They are not a bickering people; they are not captious; they do not count their change. They laugh at themselves; they forgive fools; they are inclined to reckon sin by the damage it inflicts on others. They will, when the time adheres, put into their laws the goodness they feel and express in their everyday living. It may be that they are, in a small way—and with humility, for they feel themselves a sinful folk—moving toward a way of life which is ideal, toward a state which is a church.

American democracy was meant to grow in such a direction. It was so planned. Jefferson believed in the rule of the majority for that purpose. The majority is right, he said, because when an evil bites deep into enough people they will bestir themselves and get rid of it. Thus the country will always reflect the condition of its citizens, as it should—their tolerance of graft, their desire for social justice, their concern with the female limb. They will be forced to be practical; their laws will express what they have found, after experiment, is workable and approximate to their needs, their aspirations, and their degree of goodness at the moment. If a law is beyond these conditions (as was prohibition) it will be set aside; if it is surpassed by them, it will be forgotten and remain unenforced.

It is this practicality in the evolution and exercise of goodness, this placing of the matter entirely in the people's hands, which is hopeful in America. Goodness itself, or the desire of the people to express it, means little. The condition set for it—that it must work—is the big thing. Even the Republicans (except in election years) have not criticized the New Deal for helping people. Only for doing it in an impractical way are the Democrats denounced. No one in 1919 opposed Wilson for his aims. Only for being an "impractical idealist" in the way he sought to have them achieved was he reproached. For an American a plan, a system, a machine, must work. If not, it is impractical, and, for the time being—though with hope for the future—"no good."



In his deeper life the American is also practical. William James, in "The Varieties of Religious Experience," speaking of what he calls the "mind-cure movement," says, "The blind have been made to see, the halt to walk; life-long invalids have had their health restored. . . . The plain fact remains that the spread of the movement has been due to practical fruits, and the extremely practical turn of character of the American people has never been better shown than by the fact that this, their only decidedly original contribution to the systematic philosophy of life, should be so intimately knit up with concrete therapeutics." In the forty-two years since that statement was made the "mind-cure movement" has grown so rapidly that now it is encountered everywhere. How long it will take before this desire for practical results from personal religion will weave itself into the American personality and express itself as a "national trait," erupting into politics and foreign policy, is as problematical as the life span of the sun. But there is evidence of movement in that direction. I have not found, in my researches into the subject, a single group, sect, class, or religion into which this typically Yankee attitude has not infiltrated.

Last winter I met a lady who might have been a personification of the Yankee idea; she was from Concord and Nantucket; her ancestors were among the first to board the *Mayflower*. No artist could have looked on her face without wanting to paint it, so well did her countenance bespeak the granite hills of New Hampshire, the coast of Maine, Boston's quiet pride, and the sturdy mill towns of the Connecticut valley. She told me, in confidence, that for eight years she had been practising *yoga*.

"I am not interested in the religion of the Hindus, or the metaphysical symbology of *yoga*," she said. "I never have been. I know only one thing about it. It works. I started my breathing exercises when I was sixty-two, without a teacher. I read about it in a book, and decided to try it. For years I had been partially crippled, and my fingers were bent with arthritis. I did not want to grow old and useless.

"I didn't. I am completely well

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now, and have been for years. I have as much energy as when I was forty-five. I feel a little like the Wandering Jew. All my contemporaries are growing helpless and dying off, while I stay young.

"It's just good Christianity, so far as I'm concerned. I breathe rhythmically, think of God, stay well, and use my strength to do what I can for others. I still sing in the church choir, and I'm a better member of the congregation than I ever was before."

I asked a group of disinterested friends, mostly females, to guess this woman's age. (She used no cosmetics and dressed severely.) The consensus was twenty years under the actual figure. Shortly afterward I met a lady from Philadelphia who told me she had been studying metaphysics under an occult system.

"Of course I am still a Christian and always will be," she explained. "I found I had tendencies toward mysticism and I could not find in my own church—a rather austere one—any technique for approaching the subject. I have had excellent results, and whether my experiences are illusions or not, they have helped to restore my health and made it possible for me to assist others. In other words, it works."

The same group of disinterested friends judged this woman's age to be fifteen years less than the correct figure. I should add that in the case of neither woman did the *appearance* of age matter. Had it mattered, the beauty parlor would have been her destination, not the mystical states.

A few weeks ago I met a man from New Hampshire, a retired missionary. He told me that for the past twelve years he has experimented with psychic phenomena.

"I wanted to know, before I died, whether theology was still practical, as it seemed to be in the time of the Old Testament," he said. "My family helped me. Eventually we produced every type of phenomena expected of such experiments. Then I went on to other things, mysticism, meditation—I didn't follow any technique, so none of the usual words quite describes it. But it worked. I found peace; I was able to write a book I have long wanted to write. Now Christianity means more to me than ever before—I feel that I understand Jesus, and the spiritual advice I give seems more successful than when I first began my work, and had the fire of youth to help me."

A week after D-Day I received a letter from a young friend who commands an LST boat. It was dated May 27. He had taken his boat to the beaches at Sicily, Salerno, and Anzio. Now he was in England, awaiting the invasion of France. He was not a sailor by nature; in civilian life he had worked as a newspaperman, a publicist, a radio commentator.

"During the past year," he wrote, "I have taken to really solid prayer. So has every man on my boat. I thought you would be interested to know that. In the depression days when we sat around Chumley's and Bleeck's solving the world's problems, you always contended that a spiritual revival was our only salvation. I wasn't interested then. I am now. Can this be it? I and my men hope it is.

"Just now it has a practical value. Once more we are to be tested, as no men perhaps have been tested before, and each man tries to live his life as close to normal as possible, so that when the time comes, and faith is needed, the pipes will not be frozen or rusty. Surrounded and trapped by the material—machinery, men in machinery, men mechanized—the brave, the foolhardy, the timid, have only their faith to protect them."

This, of course, is the evidence that must be weighed. The old and the unhappy turn naturally to another world, to the reality of God, to the rewards of virtue. Young men who are healthy and strong do not. Yet if by a single common experience they could be dipped in the consciousness which comes to a man when he is tired and ready to die, they might. This war, with its great wilderness of blood, could be such an experience. On the beaches, in the jungles, in the thin air where bombers fly, men cannot be brave, any more than they can be righteous or just. They can only pray.

They know this. Whether or not they will continue to know it when they come home is unpredictable. We have been in other wars, with no such happy result. But those wars did not concern so many, and the many were not flung so far, nor struck so violently, nor in such strange ways. This time the thing may happen, the big thing.

It may happen in other countries, too—in Russia, in England, in France. But here, where goodness must be practical, and the country itself is every man's conscience; where the majority is right and virtue cannot linger without a plurality, the chance is most apt. The gate is open, the table is set, the temple is prepared. If the appointment is kept, no war will have been fought in vain, no peace will have been lost. THOMAS SUGRUE.

Your Literary I. Q.

By Howard Collins

WHICH IS THE FOREIGN ELEMENT?

In this week's quiz are 15 groups of characters. Of the 5 in each group, 4 have one thing in common which the fifth does not share. Can you pick out the foreign element in each group? Allowing 7 points for each correct answer, a score of 56 is par, 63 or 70 is very good, and higher than that is excellent. Answers are on page 26.

1. One of these ladies was not an actress: Emily Costigan, Lily Mars, Bethel Merriday, Dinah Morris, Magnolia Ravenal.
2. One of these gentlemen was not a minister: Alfred Davidson, Arthur Dimmesdale, Elmer Gantry, Charles Primrose, Edward Rochester.
3. One of these was not a lawyer: Soames Forsyte, Jonathan Harker. Eugene Marchbanks, Perry Mason, Ephraim Tutt.
4. One of these was not a detective: Hercule Poirot, Ernest Pontifex, Philo Vance, Peter Wimsey, Nero Wolfe.
5. One of these was not a schoolmaster: Ichabod Crane, Ralph Hartsook, Thorneycraft Huxtable, Jeeter Lester, Wackford Squeers.
6. One of these ladies was not a housekeeper: Mrs. Bardell, Mrs. Danvers, Mrs. Hudson, Mrs. Pennycherry, Mrs. Warren.
7. One of these men was not an artist: Louis Dudebat, Priam Farll, Darius Green, Dick Heldar, Charles Strickland.
8. One of these was not a butler: Betteredge, Bunter, Crichton, Jeeves, Peggotty.
9. One of these animals was not a horse: Flicka, Gunpowder, Rosinante, Wildfire, Zenobia.
10. One of these was not a doctor: Martin Arrowsmith, Ned Darrell, Lemuel Gulliver, John Watson, Sheridan Whiteside.
11. All but one of these were giants: Anteus, Blunderbore, Gargantua, Goliath, Quasimodo.
12. One of these captains was not a sailor: Captain Ahab, Captain Corcoran, Captain Flagg, Captain Hornblower, Captain Reece.
13. One of these animals was not a cat: Flopit, Mehitabel, Selina, Tobermory, Webster.
14. One of these women was not a prostitute: Anna Christie, Moll Flanders, Charlotte Lovell, Doll Tearsheet, Belle Watling.
15. Only one of these boys grew up: Tom Canty, Paul Dombey, Timothy Forsyte, Jim Hawkins, Tom Sawyer.

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On the American Agenda

WHAT THE NEGRO WANTS. Edited by Rayford W. Logan. Symposium by Fourteen Negroes, together with a publisher's introduction. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 1944. 352 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by H. A. OVERSTREET

THIS book is not what might be called pleasant reading for white people—unless, as whites, they have reached the high moral level of feeling pretty unpleasant about themselves. Happily, a great many of them have reached that moral level; and the number is increasing. These have come to see that the problem we face today is not a Negro but a Caucasian problem. It is not the Negro who has been riding rough-shod over the human decencies—exploiting, ravaging, destroying, debasing, turning civilization into a white man's shambles. All the Negro has wanted has been to be allowed to "live in freedom, peace, and security, without being subjugated, persecuted, and humiliated by Caucasians justifying their actions by the myth of white racial superiority. . . . We seek in vain during modern times for any record of Negroes having destroyed any white cultures, having ravished and debauched white women wholesale, or having stolen white manhood. On the other hand the history of the world since 1815 is crowded with references to wars, campaigns, and expeditions by Caucasian Powers against almost every African and Asiatic nation."

If to be unable to live together in peace; to be forever plunging the sword into the neighbor's body; to be avid for profit and ruthless in exploitation; to be noble in religious pretensions and ignoble in earthly practices is the sign of the white man's "superiority," then this word has lost all moral meaning and can hardly be a banner of pride.

It is significant, says this particular contributor to "What the Negro Wants," George S. Schuyler, how the fiction has been spread that it is the Negro, not the white, who is the problem. "With great zeal and industry those controlling the media of information and instruction have succeeded in indoctrinating the whole world with this fiction. . . . It is the 'stop thief' technique at its best."

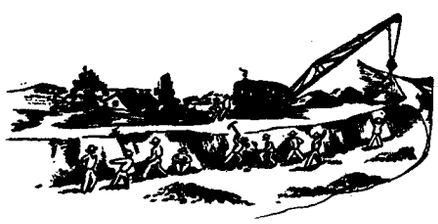
The concept "Negro problem" is one of the many stereotypes that distort thinking and make it difficult for whites to get themselves straight about what is really at issue. To speak of the "Negro problem" is to assume that it is the colored man who has created and still creates some profound difficulty for the whites, when, as a matter of historical fact, it is the whites who, by their original enslavement and continuing maltreatment of the Negro, have created and kept on creating profound difficulties for Negroes and themselves.

Not all the writers in this stirring volume are as forthright in their challenge as Mr. Schuyler. But they pull few, if any, punches. These fourteen distinguished Negroes are in dead earnest. They have things to say that have long needed to be said; and, while they speak with the restraint of cultivated people, they are at no pains to conceal what is on their minds.

What the Negro wants, they assume, is what all decent people want. "What, then, does the Negro want?" asks Mary McLeod Bethune. "His answer is very simple. He wants only what all other Americans want. He wants opportunity to make real what the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights say; what the Four Freedoms establish." The writers state their wants in the calm confidence that Americans today are rapidly becoming conscious of the intolerable hypocrisy that eats like a cancer at their moral integrity.

On every count this rates as a first-class book: first-class in the lucidity and persuasiveness of its writing; first-class in the sheer, unbreakable logic of its argument; first-class in the high level of its moral and spiritual insight. Yet the writers of this book rate as third-class Americans. Any ignorant, even degenerate white man rates higher in human privileges. Langston Hughes speaks for all his fellow contributors when he writes: "This is my land, America. Naturally, I love it—it is home. . . . Yet many Americans who cannot speak English—so recent is their arrival on our shores—may travel about our country at will securing food, hotel, and rail accommodations wherever they wish to purchase them. *I may not.* These Americans, once naturalized, may vote in Mississippi or Texas, if they live there. *I may not.* . . . I am an American—*but I am a colored American.*"

The strength of the book, however, lies not so much in its indictment as in its search for ways of extricating both white and colored from their common plight. Gordon B. Hancock states the two indispensables: (1) developing the Negro's own resourcefulness; (2) removing racial prejudices. Naturally, the writers can have little to say on the second, for, while they recognize racial prejudice among their own people and explore ways of removing it, they feel themselves helpless under the weight of white prejudice. Here they can only hope that by an increase of scientific insight and by a more effective cooperation between white and colored, this heavy weight may be lightened.



The main emphasis of the book is on what the Negro can do to develop his own resourcefulness for the common good. In this respect all the writers show a high order of leadership. No note of defeatism creeps in; no anti-democratic cynicism; no tendency to pass the buck to the white man and demand that he solve the problem that he himself has created. These writers address themselves to the strategies of politics, trade unions, newspapers, schools, colleges, and churches, and indicate in scores of ways how the Negro must learn to make use of these.

One of the most inspiring parts of the book is the account given of the Durham (colored) and Atlanta (white) Conferences, and of their continuation in the Collaboration Conference (white and colored), held in Richmond, Virginia, in June, 1943. These mark a high level of achievement in bringing together the best minds among white and colored to work openly at their common problem.

Another matter of encouragement lies in the sponsorship of this volume. "This book," writes the Publisher's Representative, W. T. Couch, "was written at the request of the Press. The idea back of the request was that the country, and particularly the South, ought to know what the Negro wants, and that statements of leading Negroes might throw some important light on this question. . . . The publisher criticized many of the articles in detail, but no changes were required and the articles as they stand express the views of their authors." In issuing a book that gives free scope to Negroes, without let or hindrance, to say what they wish to say, the University of North Carolina Press has added one more civilized achievement to its already brilliant list.

The co-authors of this impressive volume are: Mary McLeod Bethune, Sterling A. Brown, W. F. Burghardt Du Bois, Gordon B. Hancock, Leslie Pinckney Hill, Langston Hughes, Rayford W. Logan, Frederick D. Patterson, A. Philip Randolph, George S. Schuyler, Willard S. Townsend, Charles H. Wesley, Doxey A. Wilkerson, Roy Wilkins. The editor writes of the contributors that four of them might be called conservatives, five liberals, and five radicals. In the matters that basically count, they show, however, in spite of their differences, an amazing and heartening agreement.

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The Saturday Review
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MOTION WITHOUT PROGRESS

FOR the last thirty years at least one-fifth of the best-selling novels published in America have been historical romances. Comparatively few critics have been willing to survey with any seriousness this form of literature which has absorbed so much of the reading time of the American people, so that we have not been aware of the change that has overtaken the novel of historical adventure and romance.

Until 1933, when Hervey Allen's "Anthony Adverse" appeared, a rigid, almost puritanical formula for the historical romance had been established. Practically all of the writers of this form of literature had solemnly followed it, no matter to what absurd lengths it led them. The formula was simple enough and can be studied in the many novels of Rafael Sabatini, Percival Wrenn, and innumerable others, including some of the most popular historical novelists of today. The hero, if the reader came upon him full-fledged and had not followed his fortunes from boyhood, was allowed to have a wild past, so long as his misdeeds were not clearly specified. The heroine was permitted a great deal more liberty and, indeed, absurdly became the pursuer in most of these novels, whether she was a young maid or a woman with a past. The hardiest freebooters, soldiers, or adventurers must forever tremble and flee in the presence of the woman to whom they were drawn. These supposedly untamed men, guarding their virtue so rigorously through the pages of innumerable novels published over a period of thirty years, have become so rigid a literary convention that many of our historical novelists of today struggle ineffectually to escape from it.

Cecil Forester, who writes of the sea as if, to quote William McFee, "nobody had ever written a tale before," has produced in his Captain Hornblower a man who is so obsessed with this convention that he is almost laughable. Kenneth Roberts, perhaps our most popular and most accurate historical novelist, has had to standardize his heroes and heroines when it comes to their romantic behavior to such an extent that the reader knows in advance how they will act under any circumstance. While Captain Hornblower is forever being tempted by elegant and wealthy ladies, Mr. Roberts produces rustic, tom-boy heroines whom the hero refuses to recognize as grown-up women after many years and hundreds of pages. He is always seeing them as little girls in spite of the strange metamorphosis and sea change that has come over them in ten years or so. Thomas Costain, author of two popular novels, the latest of which deals with a courageous English publisher in Napoleonic days, carries this convention so far that his heroine is permitted to become the mistress of many men and perhaps even of Napoleon himself. His hero, who has loved her passionately for many years, must resist her until, finding himself alone with her in a snowstorm on the rout of the Emperor's retreat to Moscow, he is physically unable to escape his fate.

There may be many answers to a convention that has made shrinking violets out of the most virile characters in recent literature. The easiest is that the public wanted them that way, and that those who had escaped the attack on Victorian morality in which our writers of the twenties were engaged had found refuge in historical fiction and in the sweetly sentimental novels of Harold Bell Wright, Gene Stratton Porter, and James Oliver Curwood. The psychoanalyst might say that in the American middle class there had survived a tough puritanical streak and that the ordinary man wanted to visualize himself strong enough to resist temptation, and yet so attractive to women that he could be pursued by them under romantic circumstances and still be able to escape; while women wished to pursue and to tempt with the certain conviction that they would be as safe as they wished to be. It is possible, too, that the historical novelist has instinctively felt that men of action should be free, or at least that their readers would insist on their being so until the last chapter, fearing for them the horrid fate that overtakes certain male insects who are stung to death by the female as soon as they are mated. From the standpoint of the critics there may be a simpler reason for heroes who suddenly become wooden in the presence of women; it is possible that writers who can stir the blood of their readers by adventures and battles on land and sea are unable to deal plausibly with men as lovers or to create women who are flesh and blood characters. Rather than venture into realms in which they feel themselves inadequate, it is easier to fall back on a sterile pattern of behavior.

It was "Anthony Adverse" that first blew this tradition to pieces. Thus it is an historic novel in a dual sense. It was also the first modern novel of this sort that was of inordinate length. Its hero did not shrink from women and certainly women annoyed him at their peril. He first started the pendulum swinging away from puritanism and it was easy to see that there was a huge public ready to follow him or anyone else who could humanize the historical romance. It is irrelevant to note that about the same time Dashiell Hammet destroyed the frozen monasticism of the heroes of another field of escapist literature, the detective story.

But the pendulum, having started to swing, has only reached its opposite pole this year and this month, with the publication of one of the most crudely bawdy historical novels to appear since "Moll Flanders"—Kathleen Winsor's "Forever Amber," published by the Macmillan Company. It is as if we had suddenly plunged from Cromwellian days into Restoration license, and that is exactly the period of which Miss Winsor is writing, though we hasten to add that in all its 972 pages there is never a word which today we would recognize as censorable, or a paragraph that could be called literature. The very announcement of what this new novel was about sent people scurrying to the book stores, though not from any sudden passion for studious research. We do not live in a morally circumscribed time. There is no more reason why the past should be treated by squeamish novelists, or the ardent spirits of fighting heroes diluted by ice water, than that Erskine Caldwell, for example, should be asked to turn his vigorous characters into New England puritans. We have been presented with a literary absurdity for too many decades, and it is time for a change. That this novel is destined for a popular success is all too apparent. While the background and the characters of "Forever Amber" are undoubtedly the result of earnest historical research, the behavior of its heroine, her innumerable lovers, and the men and women of the court of Charles II are so outrageous to contemplate that they have as sterile an air of unreality as the most waxen of the heroes and heroines of twenty years ago. The pendulum has swung with a vengeance, but we have not gone forward an inch.

H. S.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Author Replies

SIR: As the author under review perhaps you will permit me a couple of words. I am as grateful as you would expect for Mr. Dewey's kindness in binding up my wounds—or rather for his amazingly neat demonstration that Mr. Hazlitt's horrendous broadax is a papier-maché property designed more for frightening readers away than for inflicting actual wounds.

But my principal object in writing this letter is to call your readers' attention to a very significant admission by Mr. Hazlitt. Any reader who has followed the present discussion of my treatment of Boehm-Bawerk's Robinson Crusoe argument may be a bit surprised to learn that my only misgiving in selecting it for criticism was lest it be dismissed as a trivial and inconsequential illustration, the patent absurdity of which could be admitted without damage to the main argument.

Thanks to Mr. Hazlitt we now have it on the authority of a true believer that such is not the case. In future, therefore, I shall rejoice to call the attention of my students, as I know do that of your readers, to the quaint adventures of Boehm-Bawerk's economic man among the berry bushes with Mr. Hazlitt's positive assurance, first, that "it was Boehm-Bawerk who made the greatest contribution . . . of any single economist" to the theory that industrial development is contingent upon the accumulation of capital funds, and second, that this particular berry-and-boat argument "happens to be central to (that) theory," so much so indeed that "if it is fatuous the whole of Boehm-Bawerk's theory must be so."

That is certainly splendid! Now if only we could count on Mr. Hazlitt's brothers-in-the-bond staying with him, we could be rid of the capital funds humbug in short order. But I'm afraid that's too much to expect.

C. E. AYRES.

Austin, Texas.

Superiority Among Races?

SIR: When a red man, a yellow man, or a black man tells me that the white race is superior, I will listen to his argument with respect; when a white man—or a white woman, Elizabeth Miller, in the correspondence columns of your current issue—tells me this I think I am entitled to a closed mind. There will always be in the latter case a perfectly natural suspicion that I am listening to a child however many years it has been in the world; an ancient child who has never got over saying "my toys are better than your toys," and "I betcha my dog is worth more than your dog."

If and when a superior race comes along, it will probably show its superiority in action not in words; it will probably find in its superiority enough grace not to insist upon its superiority in all matters and in-

"It's quite a nuisance in the Fall!"

stances. Indeed, among races as we know them, this adult modesty will be its great difference, the mark of its superiority.

HENRY COHEN.

New York, N. Y.

To C. M.

SIR: Perhaps Mr. Christopher Morley might be interested to know that the lines he heard the Canadian children chanting, and which he supposed were "from some Canadian classic" [*SRL* 9/30/44], are part of Walter de la Mare's charming little poem "Some One."

Some one came knocking
At my wee, small door;
Some one came knocking,
I'm sure—sure—sure;
I listened, I opened,
I looked to left and right,
But nought there was a-stirring
In the still dark night;
Only the busy beetle
Tap-tapping in the wall,
Only from the forest
The screech-owl's call,
Only the cricket whistling
While the dewdrops fall,
So I know not who came knocking.
At all, at all, at all.

I became acquainted with this in an anthology of poems for young children* in which another poem that children like is one called "Animal Crackers."** It begins:

Animal crackers, and cocoa to drink,
That is the finest of suppers, I think:

and goes on to two lines that probably have a nostalgic appeal for many present-day grown ups:

The kitchen's the cosiest place that I know:
The kettle is singing, the stove is aglow,

but I needn't quote further, for I imagine that Mr. Morley would have no trouble in filling in the rest of this poem for himself.

EULA D. MARCKS.

Detroit 7, Mich.

*"Sung Under the Silver Umbrella."

Trees Are Incurable

SIR: That quarrel between the poets and the trees—here is how they saw the problem in the eighteenth century (quoted from Walton's life of George Herbert):

Now I am here, what wilt thou do with me?
None of my books will show.
I read, and sigh, and wish I were a tree,
For then I sure should grow
To fruit or shade; at least
Some bird would trust
Her household with me, and
I would be just.

GERARD FOUNTAIN, M.D.

St. Louis 10, Mo.

**By Christopher Morley.

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TRADE Winds

IT WAS BAD ENOUGH when John Powers invaded the so-called literary heights a couple of years ago, but now all his most orchidaceous and callipygous models seem to be following his example. Gone are the days when lady authors were reasonable facsimiles of vice-presidents of the W. C. T. U. on their way to haunt houses. Vanished with them are old-fashioned publishers' ads that confined themselves to the contents of books. Today full page pictures of Kathleen Winsor, Dorothea Cornwell, Emily Hahn, and authoresses only slightly less ravishing fill the pages of the nation's literary supplements. The smarter barber shops along the Bowery are cancelling their subscriptions to the *Police Gazette* and ordering *Publishers' Weekly* instead. It is only a question of time before some smart publisher calls in Varga or Petty to glorify a new addition to his list. The idea is to persuade the customer that when he buys a copy of a book, the lady who wrote it goes with it.

Non-photogenic male novelists are aware of their predicament. Irving Stone, whose first-rate novel, "Immortal Wife," is selling merely on its own merits, writes mournfully, "Please don't think I begrudge the ladies their lovely looks, but I think someone should put the brakes on this cast-couching tendency among publishers. If all manuscripts are to be judged on the basis of their authors' pulchritude, guys like me will have to go back to school teaching. If only I could have seen into the future, I would have stayed out of San Francisco street fights and would have played tennis at the University of California instead of being on their boxing team—all of which cost me a broken nose and a couple of critical teeth."

Miss Winsor's little idyll, "Forever Amber," was launched on the wings of a hectic literary tea in what some wit described as the Macmillan Bawd Room. For once the literati not only condescended to meet the guest of honor; they insisted on it. Under the spell of the moment, Harold Williams, of the American News Company, snipped a lock of the lady's hair to paste in his memory book. "What a profile," sighed David Appel, of the *Chicago News*, "and it goes all the way down!" A noted tea drinker from the *New York Tribune* gulped a whole flagon of straight bourbon. Clearly the frail bark of literature was setting sail on an uncharted sea, and everybody was a little aphrodizzy with it all. . . .

THE COUNCIL ON BOOKS in Wartime has pointed out repeatedly that good books have played a signal part in keeping the people of America posted on the state of the world today. The vastly popular and brilliantly edited reports of diplomats like Joseph Grew and Sumner Wells, and correspondents like Ernie Pyle, Quentin Reynolds, John Gunther, William White, and dozens of other crack reporters, have filled in the gaps that the daily newspapers, pressed for space and hampered by self-imposed censorship, could not help but leave behind. An example of what the Council has been driving at took place last week in a high school in Brooklyn.

A fourteen-year-old student named Irwin Mohr declared in class that Argentina today was a downright Fascist dictatorship. His teacher stopped him short, demanded that he either produce proofs or apologize for his statement to the entire school. Mohr went straight to Ray Josephs's book, "Argentine Diary," for his facts, read paragraphs from it to four hundred students assembled in the school auditorium, won the approval of the principal, and the cheers and applause of his classmates. The principal, whose name is Isaac Bildersee, told reporters, "In my school we see that everybody gets a chance to talk." Trade Winds hopes there are lots of principals like him all over the country!

SPEAKING OF THE COUNCIL on Books in Wartime, its Armed Services Editions are exceeding the fondest hopes of everybody concerned in the project. By January, 1945, there will be forty new titles a month, with a print order of 140,000 for every one of them. That means over five and a half million free books each month for men in the services abroad. Furthermore, reports indicate that the books are read and reread until they are literally in shreds, and that the boys are already learning to discriminate between the better and the poorer titles available to them. If only five per cent of these new readers maintain their interest in books after they are mustered out, the publishing world will have trebled its potential market. . . . Wall Street interests, surveying possibilities in the book world for the first time, are not unmindful of this fact! . . .

"A MAN WRAPPED UP in himself," declares the *Advertiser's Digest,* "makes a small parcel.". . . H. L. Mencken defines a synonym as "a word used in place of one you can't spell." . . . The Putnam Bookshop is in receipt of a five-dollar money order from an inmate of Sing Sing, with instructions to send him "some good escape literature." . . . A junkshop next to the main Southern Pacific crossing at Needles has erected a sign with this hint to motorists: "Take a Chance. We'll Buy the Car." . . . The *Chicago News* reports growing absenteeism in Germany. Every day a few more factories fail to show up for work. . . . A man received a big check for services rendered, and discovered that it was one cent short. A stickler for detail, he insisted that the discrepancy be repaired, and in due course, received another check for a single penny. He presented it for payment at his bank. The teller examined it closely and asked him, "How would you like this, sir? Heads or tails?" . . .

WHEN RING LARDNER and George Kaufman finished their play, "June Moon," in 1930, they took it down to Atlantic City for a try-out. Several friends told Lardner that the third act was fine, but that the first two needed complete rewriting. Lardner, unused to the out-of-town doctoring that most plays, particularly comedies, undergo before opening on Broadway, was pretty depressed about the whole business. A boyhood chum who hadn't seen him since his schooldays in Niles, Michigan, discovered him brooding on a boardwalk bench. "Ring!" he cried happily. "What are you doing in Atlantic City"? "Oh," said Lardner, "I'm just down here with an act." . . . Lucius Beebe, about to submit to a minor operation, cautioned the doctor, "Be

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"Will you repeat the question, please?"

sure to open me at the same temperature as the room." . . .

THE MOST COMPLETELY BEGUILING and heart-warming show to hit New York since "Life with Father," is John Van Druten's "I Remember Mama," a perfect dramatization of Kathryn Forbes's "Mama's Bank Account." Close behind it in entertainment value is "Bloomer Girl," with the sprightliest score since "Oklahoma!" "Evelina," "Right as the Rain," and "The Eagle and Me" will be on the Hit Parade before you can say Frank Sinatra. . . . Trade Winds also recommends without qualification these new motion pictures: Wilson; Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo; Laura; Double Indemnity; March of Time's What to Do with Germany. . . . And these new books: "Earth and High Heaven," by Gwethalyn Graham; "The Sad Sack," by Sergeant George Baker; "People on Our Side," by Edgar Snow; "Cluny Brown," by Margery Sharp. . . . If you enjoy creepy plays like "Kind Lady" and "Angel Street," there's a book on the stands that will be just your oyster. It's called "Lie Down in Darkness," by H. R. Hays, and it is published by Reynal & Hitchcock. Mr. Hays has kept his characters in the oven too long, and they come out just a trifle overdone at the edges. Barring that minor defect, this is about as sinister and hair-raising a tale as I've read in years, and its deliberate, unhurried build-up makes the climax all the more terrifying. I wish I owned the picture rights! . . .

THE BEST SPY STORY of the month comes from Delos Avery, whose "Bookman's Holiday" column in the *Chicago Tribune* deserves national syndication. The hero is the omnipotent Ying-Nu, husband to a hundred beautiful wives, and at heart a man of some compassion. "One of you incredibly lovely ladies," he told them sadly, "has betrayed my secrets to the enemy. It would break my heart to discover which one it is. I must let the somewhat harsh law take its course. Let each tenth one of you come forth, for ten must die." But when Ying-Nu beheld the tears of the ten and observed their reluctance to have their heads chopped off, his stern features relaxed. "No, no," he cried. "It shall not be! Am I not known as a man of some compassion? There shall be instead a feast with wine and music. Come!" And Ying-Nu gently led the ten away, whispering softly to the headsman as he passed. "Off with the heads of the other ninety!"...

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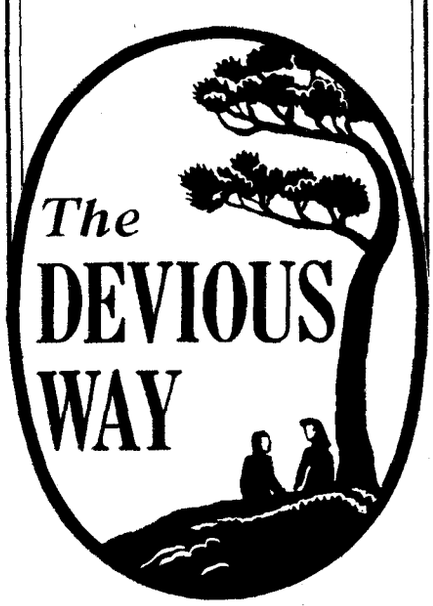
Theodore Morrison



The Calculus of Power

THE SUPER-POWERS. By William T. R. Fox. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1944. 184 pp. $2.

Reviewed by R. M. MACIVER

THE Yale Institute of International Studies has devoted itself largely to the calculus of power, and in this recent volume of its publications Mr. Fox does a lot of quite efficient calculating. At the outset he reminds us that as in the world of animals there are elephants and rabbits so in the world of politics there are elephant-states and rabbit-states. The elephant-states, at the present hour, are the United States, Russia, and Great Britain. Mr. Fox proceeds to calculate, in power terms, the likelihood that the elephant states will coöperate to keep the peace. For the prospect of peace depends on the concordat of the super-powers.

Mr. Fox is a "realist" of the geopolitical school. He reckons the grounds of possible conflict between the super-powers in meticulous numbered paragraphs. He finds that there is little or no danger that the disagreements between the two Atlantic super-powers will lead to war. He has not the same degree of assurance concerning the future relations of Russia and the Atlantic super-powers. For one thing, the population of Soviet Russia is increasing rapidly. For another, the power-revival of Germany—which the super-powers must unite to keep under—would endanger the equilibrium between them. Again, if either the U.S.S.R. or one of the Atlantic partners should attempt to gain control over "the rimland of the Eurasian land mass," or if any power or combination of powers within the "rimland" should seek hegemony over it, the danger of war would be great.

—*Bishop in the* St. Louis Star-Times.

"All Must Help in Sewing up the Wounds."

However, with various "ifs" and "buts," the author concludes that there is a good chance of Soviet-Anglo-American coöperation for a generation, and in his last sentence he finds that this coalition offers real promise of "a transition to some other than a third world war."

Mr. Fox's calculations are complex and some of them are precarious. For example, he states that "Britain and America covet no land that the Soviet Union could possibly want." If we keep within the context of power-politics this statement is misleading. Mr. Fox himself points out that Stalin has exhibited uneasiness over the presence of American forces in Iran—and what about British forces there? In the terms of power there is always uneasiness over the margins of "spheres of influence," and this uneasiness often causes a rift in the good relations of great powers and leads them along the road that ends in war. Mr. Fox tells us that it is against the interest of the super-powers to fight one another. But now he is subtly altering the basis of the argument. The terms of interest are not the terms of power. An organization based on interest would be very different from an organization based solely on power. The price of dominance comes high. Elephants don't fight rabbits, but mostly other elephants. When powers are nearly equal it is to their interest to compose their disputes.

Power calculations are always precarious, whether made by geopoliticians or by the ordinary kind. The nicely calculated less and more is confounded by the event. There never were more efficient calculators of power than the German militarists, and never were any calculations more fatal to the calculators. Nor should we forget that wars do not always arise out of power calculations. The possible causes of quarrel, between states or between men, are endless. So long as power is unconfined, whether for states or for men, their quarrels will culminate in war. Only when men think more of interest, and less of power, will they build a lasting peace. Power will always count. The rabbits will never take over the role of the elephants. But power will still count even if it is restrained by interest. The people do not calculate in terms of power; perhaps they will some day have the power—and the intelligence—to make the statesmen calculate in terms of interest. Until that time the statesmen will miscalculate, and the peoples will suffer the consequences.

BUY BONDS

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Dogtown Commons

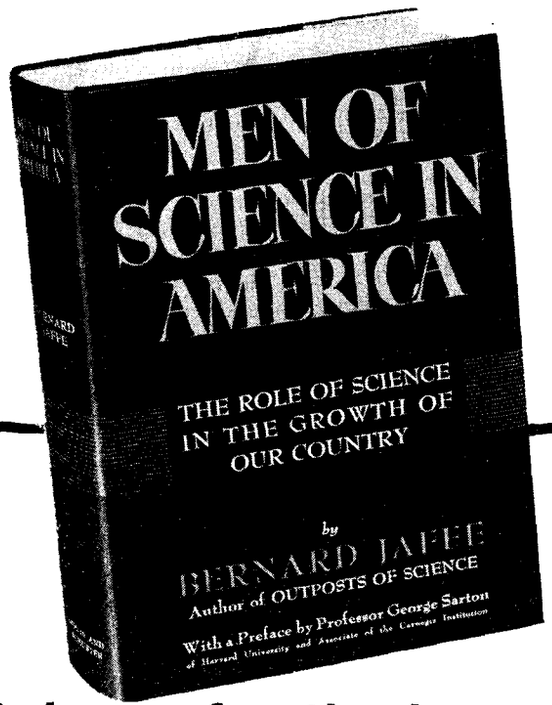
THE GALS THEY LEFT BEHIND THEM. By Margaret Shea. New York: Ives Washburn. 1944. 116 *pp.* $2.

Reviewed by KATHARINE SIMONDS

LIKE the Revolutionary War, this war has its Dogtown Commons—its communities from which nearly all the men have gone away, to which many and especially the younger will not return. The women of such a community suddenly face not only new anxieties and new spiritual responsibilities, but an entirely new social pattern. Continuing with their women's work, they must also take on their men's work. With this additional labor, much of it hard and outdoors, and with less time to keep themselves up, they begin to look rather different. As time passes, they are increasingly set apart from women living more usual lives. The wilderness encroaches on their pastures once more; the foxes are bolder. The dogs which they get to protect themselves revert somewhat to wolves, presently beginning to hunt in packs. The houses begin to look ramshackle, the children neglected.

Within the community, three types soon emerge. Two are conventional—the weak woman who escapes into playing child; the strong woman who endures with bitterness and brings up her children scarred but able to get out and survive elsewhere when they are grown. The third sort is more startling and more tragic. She is the woman of considerable physical strength and energy, who with a man's work takes on a man's attitude toward her woman's appetites. She is freed by her new situation from the hesitancies and niceties of feminine training; she takes what men she can get where she finds them. She adds to the community's air of decay and slight degeneration a note of danger; such women as she helped give an evil reputation to Hardscrabble, Hell Huddle, Horn o' the Moon—the villages across the tracks before there were tracks. Her kind in Dogtown were called witches, and Lord Timothy Dexter saw them riding wild ponies, their hair streaming, cursing like men in their harsh voices. You can see them today, less spectacular perhaps, but not less menacing to any tame and established way of life, not less bent on self-destruction and the destruction of those they encounter.

The whole subject of what happens to women in settlements during the war is a superb one for the novelist or the historian. Miss Shea has had an opportunity to observe the situation, since she and a friend went with their children to farthest Maine to wait out the return of their husbands. In this series of letters, she tells of the progress of two war-wives in the country—one who learns how to take it, the other who learns how to take it a little easy. But though she approaches with courage and gaiety the war-wife's trials and comedies, she has scarcely skimmed the comedy of the situation, let alone its tragic implications.


MEN OF SCIENCE IN AMERICA
THE ROLE OF SCIENCE IN THE GROWTH OF OUR COUNTRY
by
BERNARD JAFFE
Author of OUTPOSTS OF SCIENCE
With a Preface by Professor George Sarton

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—The Scientific Book Club Review

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LOUIS J. R. AGASSIZ (biologist) whose studies of fossils paved the way for Darwin's theory, but who for an unknown reason fought Darwinism until his death.

And, of course, BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, JOSEPH HENRY, J. WILLARD GIBBS, SAMUEL LANGLEY, A. A. MICHELSON, S. F. B. MORSE, and many others of the great and near-great names in American science.

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There is a foreword to *Men of Science in America* by Professor George Sarton of Harvard. The book contains 600 pages, 28 plates, 25 text diagrams.

Price, $3.75

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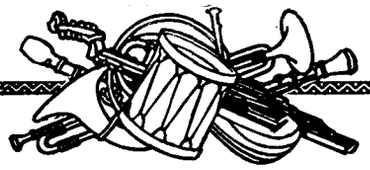

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Brother Nicholas and the Nazis

NOW WITH THE MORNING STAR. By Thomas Kernan. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1944. 234 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by ROBERT PICK

VERY little has been heard in the outside world of the dissolution in Nazi Germany of monasteries and nunneries—which is about the only really incisive victory Hitler has gained in his verbose assault on the Roman church. Nor was Hitler the first to lash out at monastic institutions; he may even claim Joseph II of Austria as a precursor in this field. In the course of his anti-curial crusade (which, incidentally, also coined the *Los von Rom* cry that was to play so great a role in the growth of German nationalism) this emperor in 1781 abolished in his realm all establishments devoted to contemplative life. Then, as today, people everywhere wondered how far Rome would go in counteracting the ignominy. Joseph of Hapsburg, to be sure, was no Hitler —and so Pius VI could also safely journey to Vienna, trying to halt the violent actions of the utilitarian and benevolent "enlightened despot." It was of no avail. But it is well to remember today that in the face of an ever-impending rupture the papacy "held firm" (as a modern historian has put it) "and the thin strand of mutual mistrust and dislike which linked emperor and pope was not cut."

The author of the present book is not concerned with such wider aspects, or with the historical roots, of the successful Nazi campaign against monasticism. In an unpretentious way he tells the story of Brother Nicholas, one of the monks driven out from an abbey in the Black Forest. On its surface Mr. Kernan's short novel is just another black-and-white Nazi tale; but it manages to move the reader and prompt him to give another thought to the uncounted personal tragedies which victory will not be able to undo.

Mr. Kernan is not a skilled novelist. Hardly any one of his characters shows three dimensions; the higher-ranking clerics he introduces are not more than mouthpieces of a conventional attitude. Yet Brother Nicholas is somehow of flesh and blood; his search for work in the Germany of the late thirties—doubly strange to a man who has left the world shortly after the first war—makes for as good a picture of German decay and bewilderment as many a more spectacular yarn. And the ex-monk's courage in smuggling messages from the archbishop's chancellery to Switzerland and Swiss currency back into the Reich becomes credible on the mere strength of his simple faith.

This book was written during Mr. Kernan's internment at Baden-Baden. Considering the limited contacts with German life he must have had in that situation, and the apparent lack of previous experiences in Germany, the author does a fine piece of reporting. But the solitary months of his internment seem also to have given him a good understanding of secluded life, and even a certain sympathy for monastic contemplation. Which, in the end, unfortunately leads him to preaching and to overdone accents.

Caught on his smuggler path and sentenced to ten years' imprisonment, Brother Nicholas is brought, of all places, to his former abbey which meanwhile has been transformed into a labor camp. A British air attack offers him a chance for escape. But he stays—and it is precisely his decision to stay (and to carry on as "a loyal witness to the truths and the beauties of the past" and "a faithful watcher for the dawn") which with its hymnal tones is marring an otherwise poignant, unaffected story. For on the whole Mr. Kernan has tackled his difficult subject with remarkable sincerity.

FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT: No. 72

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle.

IF YOU ARE STUCK: *The clue below the cryptogram will give you the definition of one word. Answer to No. 72 will be found in the next issue.*

FABCBDKF, GJEHLMBLD JCPACQ NXPO FKH HGJF, HLFABLHM BL MRJSBHX AXHGFKJ KHX TXGBMHM CPESJ P'HX FKH NGBX NXPLF GLM XGMBGLF HQHJ PN MGQ.

—U. T. JKHCCHQ. —GCGJFPX.

CLUE: The seventh word means TWISTED TOGETHER.

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 71

THE HYPOCRITE DOTH VIZARD HIS VILLAINY WITH THE MASK OR VEIL OF VIRTUE.

—JOHN TAYLOR.

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Butte During the Copper Boom

THE GLITTERING HILL. By Clyde F. Murphy. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1944. 478 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by PHIL STONG

PUBLISHERS, for some reason, are picking strange fruit this season. It has been argued with some reason that all that is necessary for the making of a best-seller is a ban by the Boston censors and if so this book is in by forty lengths, in spite of evident defects. They will be hawking Lady Chatterley and Fanny Hill on Boston Common before ever "The Glittering Hill" has the sanction of the authorities.

Not only does this novel contain a heavy seasoning of naughty words and an unconvincing scene of passion, but it has priests who drink and laugh at dirty stories and, worst of all, it pauses every once in a while to wonder what is the matter with the Irish. It seems to have been safe to send a man to Boston to defend one little word of respectable Latin derivation, but it would be inadvisable to send anyone up there to defend the Hill, even in a tank.

The story is about Butte during the copper boom of the Nineties. Quite independently, Nick Stryker and Evelyn Shannon are on the same train bound for that place, he as an adventurer and she with her uncle to visit Magnus Dunn, the copper czar of Montana. Nick is an amoral villain who nevertheless entertains himself with the duller passages of Bacon's Essays throughout the book. Little is as yet known about Miss Shannon except that she is a girl of ineffable beauty with a family of great wealth.

Also on the train are Dennis O'Shea and Tom Gary, Minnesota Irishmen, bound for Dublin Gulch, the Irish slums of Butte, and labor in the copper mines. Dennis is the robustious Hibernian who wins everyone's heart with a very cheap line of patter and some ancient livery stable jokes; Gary is the strong, silent type.

The book has a Dickensian shift of sequences that is somewhat bewildering so that here it jumps to the Gulch where Hogan, the boss miner, has promised to get a little girl's cat out of an abandoned mine shaft into which it has fallen—a somewhat improbable drop of nine hundred feet since the cat survived.

The details of some stirring "shanty" Irish funeral rites and too much of Grogan's liquor lead to a rescue attempt in which Gary is maneuvered into the perilous job of going down in an improvised bucket lift. He does not rescue the cat but scares it through an old tunnel where it disappears. Evelyn on a tour of the adjoining Dunn mine finds a cat. Nick is the first to understand the significance of the coincidence; he buys the abandoned shaft and proceeds to steal Dunn's ore and make a fortune.

Gary beats the town bully to death but his partner, Dennis, is a confidante of Nick's and Nick owns the local district court, so the case is dismissed. Not so the case between Nick and Dunn when the latter finds out where Nick's ore is coming from; Nick's judge has had a sudden attack of conscience.

At this point the author seems to have decided that 478 pages were enough for any novel, which is correct, and concludes with a brief denouement of glittering improbabilities. The love affair between the heiress and the miner sounds like "Pinafore" in the copper mines.

There are some excellent scenes in the book but they are not very firmly attached to each other. In dealing with the Irish the author should have emphasized that he was dealing almost solely with the lowest type of immigrant "shanty" Irish. In general, there is no excuse for Irish tenors but in other arts and activities they have created great culture and great traditions.

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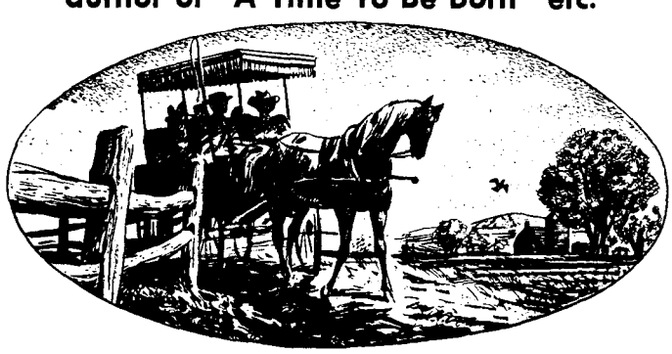
THE NEW NOVEL BY
Dawn Powell
author of "A Time To Be Born" etc.



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MIDWEST BOOK NEWS

Au Revoir
But not Good-bye!

by Ben Abramson

As many of my good friends know, we are moving the Argus Book Shop to New York, with the intention of expanding our publishing business.

Because of the countless happy memories of activities with books in Chicago the decision was not an easy one.

After almost a third of a century with books in the Middle West as a small part of the region's life of books, the region's book life has become a part of me.

The contacts with great creators of books in Chicago and the Middle West have made a deep impression on me as well as on American literature.

Though I will have moved to New York I will still feel identified with the city of Hamlin Garland, Carl Sandburg, Vincent Starrett, and many other figures, well known or obscure, creators of the literature I have sold . . . who by their encouragement and participation are inextricably woven into my life and the literary life of the community.

In the past few years there has been a quickening of book consciousness in the Chicago area which intensifies my regret at leaving.

Much of this has been brought about by the appearance of Book Week. This was not only an important event on its own account in the book world, but it stimulated other newspaper publishers to a recognition of the importance of book coverage and now is a very important means of transmitting news of books, reviews of books and advertisements of books to an increasingly interested public.

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The Story of Jan Reiger

PARTNER IN THREE WORLDS. By Dorothy Duncan. New York: Harper & Bros. 1944. 340 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by LILLIAN T. MOWRER

DOROTHY DUNCAN'S title for her latest book, "Partner in Three Worlds," is significant, for Jan Reiger, whose biography she writes, was never merely a subject of the lands in which he lived. His richly sensitive nature, his boundless energy and initiative, and above all his capacity for spiritual development made him a conscious participant in every phase of his changing worlds.

From poverty-ridden youth in Prague, under Austria-Hungary; through easy days as banker and internationally famous industrialist of the Czech Republic, to a refugee's existence in the United States, Jan Reiger maintained his integrity and his awareness of his relationship to himself and his fellow creatures, a man who refused either to rail at fate or accept defeat.

"Your will to live is strong, Jan!" whispered his mother that dreadful night on the Karluv Bridge when his tiny hands clung to hers in a nameless terror and he drew her back from the parapet and sight of the Vltava whose black rushing waters seemed the only solution to her loneliness and misery. And his will to live triumphed over hungry, humiliating schooldays, over World War I, and his return, as simple soldier, to fight in World War II.

Yet there was nothing wrong with his early life as he saw it: his mother's love and gallant spirit not only compensated for material hardships, but she gave him something of her own craving for beauty, her sense of values and sturdy pride in the old Bohemian city where they lived. Without any political consciousness she never forgot she was a Czech and that one day her land would be free.

As a boy Jan did not know what this meant, but in the post-war years as he found work in the young Republic and watched his fellow Czechs going about their business, knowing exactly what they wanted and where they were going, her words returned to him and he began to understand the evolution of his country from part-Empire to democracy. Gradually he realized that democracy is something that cannot be simply given to a people, it must be learned and felt and used. Then he knew that there had been thousands of simple citizens just like his mother who had nurtured a faith and believed in freedom, humanity, and equality, so that, when the time came, the country had really made itself over in the likeness of an ideal which for three centuries had lain buried in its subconscious.

The chapters on Jan's life in Prague of the twenties—as he makes these discoveries—are easily the best in the book. The very smell and texture of the place are in them, with the Hradcany—that stronghold around which the city grew—dominating the picture, just as its palaces and monasteries on the crest of the hill tower over terraced gardens sweet with lime trees, acacias, and chestnut. It was a striving, thriving city, fascinating combination of modern and medieval: the frontier world of folk music and dance was at its backdoor and the old wild gypsy life of Central and Eastern Europe colored its existence as in no other capital.

Jan grew rich and his lust for life increased, but it was not merely learning to be a man of the world which engrossed him, it was learning to know the nature of this world, making his "soul-deep adjustments" to it which concerned him most. When he deserted banking to take over a bankrupt factory; when he built up his new business until his list of clients read like an international "Who's Who," his success was heightened by the satisfaction of recognizing that his fine glass was part of the cultural pattern of his country and that in making it and spreading its fame he too was a tiny but definite part of a very magnificent whole.

Dorothy Duncan has written a heart-warming story of that particular brand of national pride which animated so many of the recreated States after the last war, but which, in the case of Czechoslovakia at least, was tempered with moderation and wisdom. She has a vivid gift of evoking the essence of a place and period: her hero is anything but a political figure yet his life fills the span of his country's rise and downfall and much of its history is mirrored in his personal doings. His reactions to other ways of living and new habits of mind typify the adjustments so many of us will have to make in this shrunken world of ever-growing collaboration. The author has not only told an exciting and very readable tale; her implications go beyond the simple narrative. As she says of Jan—leaving in battledress for active duty—: "if this nameless man lost his war we all lost ours with him; if he won it we could all live again."

WAR BONDS
Not a Gift, But Thrift

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Crackup on the Home Front

TILL THE BOYS COME HOME. By Hannah Lees. New York: Harper & Bros. 1944. 329 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by SARA HENDERSON HAY

THIS is the story of a woman who did not keep the home fires burning. When Sophie Harbor's husband Neb was sent overseas she cracked up, emotionally and morally. Although she had economic security, a job which could have absorbed her intellectually (she had been her husband's assistant in medical research and on his departure took over added responsibility in the laboratory), two small children whose development could have filled to some extent the emotional gap left in her life, and a number of women friends whose husbands were also overseas, Sophie's physical, that is to say sexual, dependence on her husband and its consequent frustration cancelled every other interest in her life.

The problem with which this book deals is certainly a real one, and millions of women have had to make a more drastic adjustment than Sophie Harbor faced. Most of these women have done a much better job; they have brought up their children, worked at much less interesting occupations than Sophie's medical research, coped with meagre finances, kept busy and relatively happy. They have put a part of their lives in abeyance and still maintained their emotional balance, they have been both physically and mentally chaste, and Sophie's reaction to their common problems will both shock and disgust them. It is obvious, however, that Miss Lees's story is not about a normal woman. Sophie's physical need verges on nymphomania. It is conceivable that a woman who has had a full and passionate relationship with her husband might be driven by loneliness to accept in an unguarded moment physical consolation from another man, and if Sophie's problem had been one such experience the book would have had a more universal bearing on human behavior. But to become, with open eyes, the mistress of not one man but two, with a bit of Lesbianism flung into the bargain, and all in the space of six months after her husband's enlistment, takes Sophie out of the realm of what is accepted as normality.

Miss Lees works very hard to convince her readers that a great many women are over-sexed, and both Sophie and her friends, among them one Milla who has been on the town but is now striving to remain true to her soldier husband, do a lot of rationalizing about whether physical chastity is important or not, whether it isn't as necessary to be as generous with one's body as with one's spirit, etc., etc.—discussions which in their cynicism, super-sophistication, and intensity are reminiscent of nothing so much as college bull sessions. Miss Lees also is a bit unfair in portraying those wives (including Sophie's sister Julia) who do remain chaste as excessively dull, smug, and stupidly sentimental persons, busy with the Red Cross and sewing circles, wrapped up in their children, talking in platitudes. Julie *is* a stupid person, and in her Miss Lees lampoons snobbish, intellectually dishonest, "conventional" people. But such a back-handed defence of her heroine seems a little like stacking the cards. There are in the book some good blows struck against anti-Semitism and blind prejudice—it is Sophie's one good point that her political and social thinking is straight.

"Till the Boys Come Home" will, as the blurb says, "shock some people" and it will repel a great many more, not because of its frankness and honesty in dealing with abnormal psychology, but because Sophie herself, in her weakness, her selfishness, her condonement of vulgarity and promiscuity, and her lack of any sort of integrity, is a character for whom the reader will have no liking and very little sympathy.

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JACQUES

Barzun

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(an excerpt of which appeared in the *Saturday Review* September 16th, 1944)

●

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Reggie Fortune

SOLVES THE *November*

CRIME CLUB SELECTION

THE

CAT'S Whisker

BY H.C. BAILEY

*A man was burned to death . . . a girl was drowned . . . an armament factory was blitzed . . . and Reggie Fortune still felt that these were minor incidents in a much bigger game. What sinister mind was behind the hostility that suddenly arose among the British, Canadian and American troops stationed in a small English town? Psychology, plus a Persian cat's whisker, plus the false teeth found near a murder victim—who had his own teeth intact — disclose a killer whose worst crime was not murder.

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Blitzed into Marriage

CHEDWORTH. By R. C. Sherriff. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1944. 295 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by RICHARD A. CORDELL

AS an unprofessional writer Sherriff rang the bell loudly with "Journey's End" in 1929; since that time as a professional author he has achieved pleasant little tinkles with a few intelligent but static plays, and several equally intelligent but unexciting novels. "Chedworth" is as English as its title suggests—an American aviator in the story when tweaked about the name of his home town, Topeka, retorts that "Chedworth" sounds like an English cheese. It is a quiet, literate, and unadorned novel, which is reminiscent in character and setting of "Rebecca," but which achieves finally a significance missing in Miss Du Maurier's feverish opus. The story begins in the London revue theater which defied the blitz and which still boasts "We never closed." In an air raid, boy (Sir Derek Chedworth) meets girl (music hall actress from Camden Town). She goes to the Cornish estate with its preposterous hundred-room mansion as Lady Chedworth, and as a real helpmate to her blind husband.

There is, however, no wicked housekeeper, or any other melodramatic source of distress. Disaster threatens this stately home of England not because its proprietors have been lazy and inept like Chekhov's aristocrats, but because in a socialized country like modern England Chedworth is an economic and social anachronism which cannot survive. Lady Chedworth, who is realistic and practical, seems very American (one suspects that America puzzles Camden Town far less than it puzzles Mayfair), and aggressively battles against the shackling conventions of centuries which make economic recovery even more impossible. In 1942 German bombers come to her assistance: when the huge mansion is destroyed, the shaky marriage is steadied, and the baronet free of a monstrous, inhuman bondage. He can now keep his accounts on his thumbnail and devote his days to living.

When Chedworth is leased to the U. S. Army Air Corps for a bomber base, the novelist has an opportunity to compare Briton and American, and to detail the pleasant and unpleasant results of billeting several thousand brisk Americans near a sleepy market town in an isolated Cornish valley. Sherriff takes full advantage of his opportunity. He avoids the hackneyed generalizations about national differences, and is as fair and unimpassioned as we expect the author of "Journey's End" to be. Few British novelists succeed so well in making their American characters credible to American readers, or in reproducing the American language convincingly and undistortedly.

ANSWERS TO LITERARY QUIZ

1. Dinah Morris. 2. Edward Rochester. 3. Eugene Marchbanks. 4. Ernest Pontifex. 5. Jeeter Lester. 6. Mrs. Warren. 7. Darius Green. 8. Peggotty. 9. Zenobia. 10. Sheridan Whiteside. 11. Quasimodo. 12. Captain Flagg. 13. Flopit. 14. Charlotte Lovell. 15. Timothy Forsyte.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, and Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
THE CASE OF THE BLACK-EYED BLONDE *Erle Stanley Gardner* (Morrow: $2.)	Gal with lovely shiner starts P. Mason on case that involves murder, kidnapping, embezzlement, and what-not.	The best Perry Mason yarn in several seasons. Plot, dialog, situations—all interesting, and story gets outside regular "pattern" to advantage.	Essential
TOO MUCH POISON *Anne Rowe* (Mill: $2.)	Patient of recently wed doctor busts into party for newly-weds and dies. Cliff Mallory elucidates this and subsequent slayings.	Genial amateur who works closely with police inspector does good job in spotting distributor of "cobra venom"—and wins bride.	Entertaining
HUE AND CRY *Thomas B. Dewey* (Morrow: $2.)	Pretty school-marm found dead in small town hotel. Proprietor of hostelry, with his manager's help, unravels initial crime and violent follow-up.	Marijuana, juvenile delinquency, and adult philandering all play part in lively, lurid, and outspoken opus.	Toughie

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Solomons Story

BRIDE IN THE SOLOMONS. By Osa Johnson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1944. 243 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by NATHAN L. ROTHMAN

OSA JOHNSON'S latest book is an account of her earliest traveling experiences, when, as a bride of nineteen, she and Martin went to the Solomons. These islands were hardly a household word then, as they are now. And even now we are apt to think of the Solomons in terms of Yanks and Japs, forgetting entirely the original inhabitants. Of these there were always a number of exciting and entertaining rumors, the chief of which ascribed to the Solomon Islanders a taste for human flesh. Osa and Martin went there to see if they could not get some photographic evidence of this. They got it, in one picture which shows the natives standing very glumly over some spits, on which they are turning what they call "long pig." The picture is no more revelatory, now that we see it, then the printed word.

But there are many other photographs here, close-ups of the natives individually and in groups, and these are highly suggestive. Something, some approximation of the mystery of an alien personality, seems just about to break through the pictures, from these faces, grim, frowning, dignified, thoughtful, hesitant, to us. The pictures seem indeed to come closer to clear speech than the prose does. Mrs. Johnson does record dutifully much of the data on sanitation (absence of), polygamy, dances, education of the young—without coming any closer to the natives of Guadalcanal and Malekula than, perhaps, she wanted to at nineteen. The character of these people, their anthropological self, is in the faces that stare from the excellent photographs.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 553)

SIR R. L. BORDEN:

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(N. Y. CITY—Nov. 18, 1916)

(CANADIAN)

One peculiar trait of the British nation is its faculty of self-criticism in times of stress. . . . These internal disagreements . . . are but the mists which hover about and . . . for the moment obscure the granite summit of the nation's purpose.

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Eschewing the familiar, Ted Collins and his five distinguished collaborators have here presented seven New York murders hitherto inexplicably given little or no attention.

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The Phoenix Nest

ODE TO THE PARTY OF LINCOLN
Some Eighty Years After

IN the same twelvemonth, in two log cabins born,
Davis and Lincoln, on the old frontier,
fruit of Kentucky and the pioneer . . .
A century ago the prairie torn
by a prophetic reaper! Western men
hailing a Springfield man of mighty frame
who drawled against the growth of slavery's shame
with the red seed of freedom planted then.
Gaunt rangy giant of the rough black hair
and Saxon words and wide and humorous mouth,
swept into office for union and for peace,
while Davis split his party in the South
the fury of secession to prepare,
the torrent of war that Sumter would release. . . .

But now, whose is the schism, whose greatest man,
honest and honorable, speaks from death
though spurned by you in life? The rant runs high
as deeper, deadlier forces in control
betray your best, still unrepublican,
urging intolerance with every breath,
garbling the letter and leaving out the soul,
bearing false witness, shrieking to the sky
(like the Weird Sisters) of omens in the weather,
rousing the prejudice of race and class
stirring all contradictory things together
as in that caldron dark the seething mass . . .
In the hour when men have evil by the throat,
the petty voices quote, distort, and quote. . . .

Whose clear decision linked the continents
in a new neighbor spirit of fluid trade,—
the great agreements you desire unmade?
Toward the large world who knows your real intents?
When under the black weight of evidence
on proved apostates from the human race
all Europe groaned, and blood cried from the ground,
in what oblivion was your vision bound?
your conscience where? that could or would not see
the terrible consequence of your apathy.
It was as though the Graiae's sisters' glare,
the writhing girdle and the hissing hair
of Gorgons, now confronted face to face,
had turned you into stone—as though you lay
on Celion, sleeping destiny away.

What have you learned, save how to wet the finger
held to the wind, and cry, "The trend is thus!"
What do you prize beyond the animus
against new laws, who would return to linger
in the fat pastures of the privileged few
among the fleshpots that have rightly gone?
Now is a dawn for nations, a red dawn.
Have our American soldiers died for you?
Not for your narrow vision, your canting cry,
those thrusting onward under thundering sky
make good the advance and quit themselves like men.
Not for cupidity or doubtful faith
have they hewed against the iron mask of death,
but that their well-loved land be born again.

Upon her forehead the overflowing light
of a new world deliverance, in her hand
again the torch—that bore the deadly brand!
But you sit arguing in an elder night,
foiling the suffrage of her absent sons,
cherishing the despoilers of Man's hope,
even as your land essays the difficult slope
of world-accord, whereon she faltered once.
There stood a leader, whom you might have taken,
who spoke to you of this, and in due season;
but still the coil of obstruction and unreason
prevails upon you, while the people waken
tried in the terrible fires of war and loss
to lift Man's godhead from the bloodied cross.

We know in whom we trust, a man reviled
as Lincoln was in his lone eagle years
whose depth of pity, whose range of thought appears
too great today for any hate that smiled
and cursed him in that time that seems so far . . .
We know our chieftain, with a soul and will
to work for all Mankind, to labor still,
as he has toiled for us in peace and war.
Now, when the mighty armies meet and shock
and good with evil in the balance sways;
now, when world-destiny waits upon the clock
in the great sum of all our yesterdays,
against what fiery winnowing winds may blow,
who stands our friend, and where, Earth's peoples know.

From State College, New Mexico, comes a letter taking strong exception to Louis Villano's letter which I recently printed. The new writer prefers that his own letter "be read, passed on to Mr. Villano, and then destroyed." Inasmuch as I have not Mr. Villano's address, I will send him this rather violent missive if he will tell me where to reach him. The truth about Reconstruction probably lies somewhere between the points of view of Katherine V. Strong whose August letter roused Mr. Villano, Mr. Villano's own (which seems to agree with that of Howard Fast), and the red-hot opinion of my latest correspondent. It was Miss Strong who first brought up the matter of Reconstruction. My latest correspondent upbraids me for not measuring up to my late brother who "would have been no party to spreading lies that would simply fan old flames and make men remember how bitter their fathers were—and with cause, by God." I have never desired to "fan old flames," but merely to arrive at the truth by open discussion.

ARTHUR W. BELL CONTRIBUTES:

Since the late Big Blow, several cases of infected insect bites have been reported, on Cape Cod, which are attributed to a so-called hurricane spider; hence the following:

THE NEW MENACE

The wind and the sea with their buffet
Had swept away all save her tuffet;
A hurricane spider
Then sat down beside her
And scared the whey out of Miss Muffet!

"What a pity," says H. T. Craven of Philadelphia, "that William Rose Benét, in turning out that finely interpretative and almost cosmic imitation of 'Mr. Dooley,' the other day, didn't pause to look up the spelling of Archey Road. It's 'Archey' not 'Archie'." *Touché!*

Arthur Krock writes:

At last I have found a good rhyme
for the name of our eminent lady journalist:

But please preserve with acid formic
The works of Anne O'Hare McCormick.

The doggerel file is closed on this chapter, I hope. But I wanted to prove that there is a rhyme for practically every word.

Mr. Krock has proved it. Not only that, but I take some credit upon myself for having spurred him on to higher flights than his original "dornick"!

Incidentally, I shall astonish Mr. Krock by recommending to *SRL* readers his column in *The New York Times* of October 24, 1944. In it is clearly set forth a way by which the American representative of the proposed Council of the United Nations be empowered to act without further recourse to Congress. Mr. Krock comments also upon a further contingency raised at the Dumbarton Oaks conference, one that constitutes the remaining barrier to true international coöperation. I myself do not see how, in spite of the Russian contention, if the power accused of aggression is to be present

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at discussion and to cast its own vote *against action against itself*, a meeting of the Council, insofar as the great powers are concerned, is going to have any teeth at all. The President did not deal with this point in his speech to the Foreign Policy Association; but it will have to be dealt with; and I, as a strong Roosevelt man and a declared friend of the Soviet Union, think it of the utmost importance.

Mr. Krock stated the matter with great clarity and precision; and at the bottom of his column he came forward with the following most important statement on another matter, which I print verbatim. On these two counts I commend his column. Mr. Krock:

REPUBLICAN DISTORTION

Copies of the texts of official broadcasts by the Republican National Committee have been sent to this correspondent in which the committee seeks to establish that the President's phrase "Clear everything [or it] with Sidney [Hillman"] reported by this correspondent July 25, "means that the convention was left in charge of Sidney Hillman, top man in the radical PAC."

That is an unwarranted and most unfair use of the facts reported by this correspondent. The words, as he made amply plain, applied only to the Vice Presidential nomination of the Democrats at Chicago, which was "cleared" with Mr. Hillman. The committee's omnibus interpretation is transparently distorted and untrue.

Some readers have objected, I believe, to the fact that politics—or, as I prefer to regard it, public affairs—have intruded too often into a column (this one) supposed to be primarily devoted to books. But this column is also my own fighting corner, due to the kind indulgence of the editor of *The Saturday Review*. The world is too exciting these days for me to confine myself entirely to old books. However, I shall try to "moderate my transports," without hauling down any colors! Anyway, the election will be over soon!

Another good friend is gone: Clare Dana Mumford, beautiful, charming, and the organizer and founder of the Query Club whose membership included, for discussion and debate, some of the most eminent and brilliant women of our time. She was brilliant herself, a poet, a painter, and head of her discussion club for over a quarter of a century. She was ever generous, witty, and kind.

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

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PERSONALS

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WOMAN WITH VARIED INTERESTS would appreciate letters from conservative gentleman, fiftyish. Box 425-K.

TALL YOUNG MAN, thirtyish, interested piano, aviation, music, psychology, traveled, desires correspondence with attractive young lady of somewhat similar mental and physical stature. Box 426-K.

HALF-PINT WIDOW, Franco-British, fortyish, widely traveled, desires correspondence with gentleman similar age. Box 427-K.

LADIES DISPOSSESSED BY VULTURE seek new nest, Main Line, starting January, for writer and mother. Moderate rental essential. Living-room, fireplace desired. Box 428-K.

MAGAZINE WRITER will impart literary facts of life to talented unpublished beginner for occasional typewriting assistance. Box 422-K.

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BEWILDERED BY METAPHORS? Bogged down in stock responses? See the EXPLICATOR. 1247 College Station, Fredericksburg, Va. Subscription $1.00.

BOOKS WANTED: Illustrated Books, Roger de Felice's "French Furniture Under Louis XIII, XIV, XVI and the Empire." Translated Atkinson; same Louis XV, translated Simonds; edited Heinemann, London, MCMXXII. Write 1440 Broadway, Room 451, New York 18.

MAN, UNDERSTANDING, refined, presentable, writer-researcher, former University instructor in psychology and sociology, invites correspondence with a sincere, understanding, cultured woman. Box 412-K.

GENTLEMAN, SINCERE, FORTYISH, widower, romantic, longing correspondence lovely woman. Box 413-K.

KNIGHT ERRANT: Intelligent, spiritual maiden, thirtyish, seeks release from empty mailbox dragon. Box 414-K.

GENTLEMAN, mourning loss of friend, seeks correspondence with ladies, fiftyish. Box 415-K.

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AMERICAN WIDOW, fortyish, living in Canada, would like to correspond with American gentleman of culture, education and refinement. Have been used to finer things of life. Hazelton. Box 429-K.

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INCORRIGIBLE IMPROVER of other people's property seeks two- to five-room unfurnished apartment, Manhattan. Can supply electric refrigerator, gas range, and circulating oil heater. Or will sublet furnished apartment after December first. Librarian. Box 419-K.

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YOUNG MAN seeks friendship through correspondence. Box 424-K.

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(Continued on next page)

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PERSONALS

(*Continued from page 29*)

ELDERLY, RETIRED ENGINEER seeks intelligent, young typist to compile biography one morning a week at his apartment. Box 432-K.

YOUNG LADY wishes course in Shakespeare. Individual guidance. Box 433-K.

PRIVATE ENGLISH LESSONS, Manhattan (N.Y.C.), Sundays, moderate. Box 441-K.

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SEEK COMPETENCE IN TUTORING for advanced technical and craftsmanship problems in novel. Require weekly visit to Jamaica (L. I.). State qualifications. Box 443-K.

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IN ARIZONA SUNSHINE: Cottage for rent, completely furnished, modern, on cattle ranch. Limited transportation offered. Write Mimi Abbott Klene, Curly Horse Ranch, Sonoita, Arizona.

NEW YORK BACHELOR, artistic, lonesome, non-highbrow, thirtyish, will share his attractive apartment with sober, home-loving chap. Object: Permanent companionship, not financial gain. Unusually fine opportunity for sincere, loyal fellow who desires good home and one devoted pal. Details, please. If possible, photo. Address: Edward, 41 West 73rd St., N. Y. 23, N. Y.

ART MUSEUM WORKER, experienced in research and writing, desires change of position. Box 445-K.

WISH TO PURCHASE for my collection old horse racing magazines, books, programs. Box 447-K.

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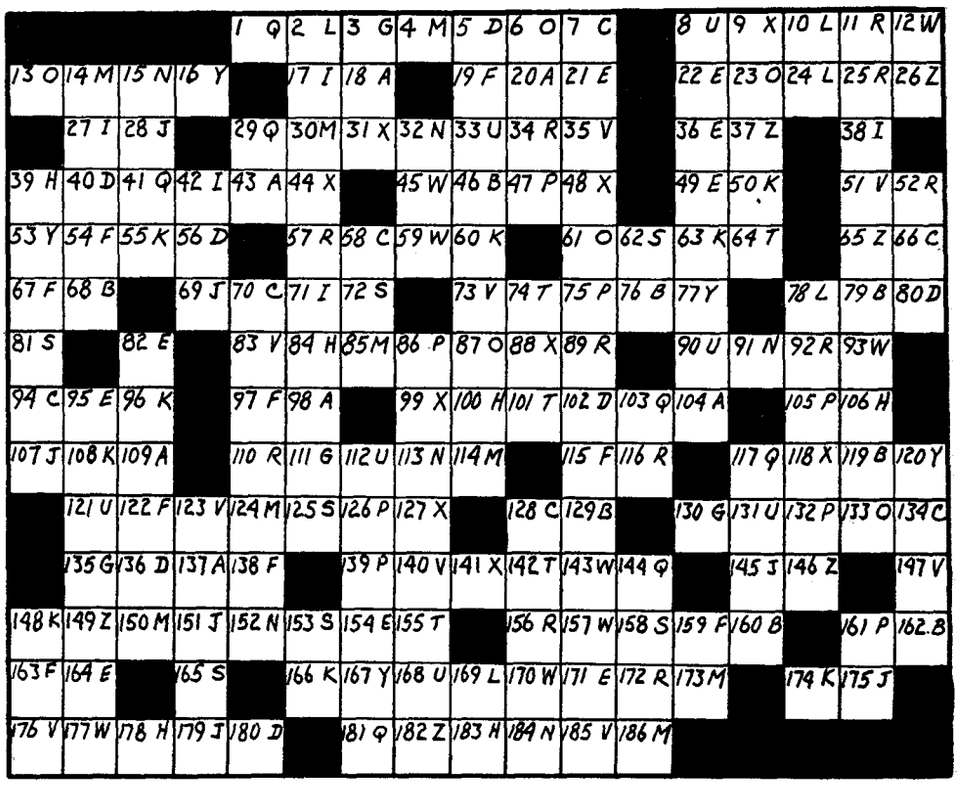
The Crostics Club

CONSTANTLY I receive inquiries as to how one can secure our DC books preceding Series 15 and 16 still to be had from the *SRL*. In reply to my inquiry of the publishers, Simon & Schuster, 1230 6th Ave., New York 19, N. Y., they tell me that Series 1, 2, and 13 are out-of-print, but copies of all the others are still on hand. In case you are interested I append the substance of the respective anthologies still in stock: Series 3 is international in scope (in translations, of course); Series 4, 7, 11, 12 contain English and American writers, Series 12 being all prose selections: Series 5 and 6 are letters from famous people to others not necessarily so well-known; Series 8, 9, and 10 are exclusively American writers; Series 14 and 15 are devoted to wit, humor, and satire from both American and European authors; Series 16 and 17, the latter now in press, center about biographical material. My own favorites are 5 and 6, as letters are so revealing, whereas for the puzzler the language used is more informal than in ordinary excerpts, and every acrostic contains a *to* to separate the writer from the recipient. As the answers to the puzzles were to be had only by writing for them up to Series 6 when they were contained in the back of the book, Series 3, 4, 5 do not contain the answers. When you find typographical errors in the earlier Series, don't write to tell us about them. We know only too well to our sorrow of their existence, due to inadequate proof-reading at that time.

Recently Mr. and Mrs. Edward Weiler, of New York, and I spent a pleasant evening together in the course of which I showed them a DC on which I was working. It wasn't quite finished: a word beginning with *n* had to be supplied, and all the letters I had left on hand were *u* and *p*. But there was an *a* I could take from another word if needed. I could find no such word as *nupa,* but under *napu* in WNI I read: "Any of numerous chevrotains of the India-Malay region, esp. *Tragulus Napu* of Sumatra and *T. javanicus* of Java. They are similar to the kanchils but larger. See *chevrotain.*" *T. j.* of Java was pictured. Under *chevrotain* was pictured a kanchil. So *napu* went into that DC, and *chevrotain* and *kanchil,* into my notebook for future use when *h's* are abundant. And that's how it happens!

And to show you that at least once I spared your feelings and "acquired merit," I hope, thereby, I refrained from using the name of a German mathematician of the eighteenth century named Pfaff for the fly in ointment.



Double-Crostics: No. 554

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-six words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (1940 edition).

The solution of last week's *Double Crostic* will be

DEFINITIONS

A. Greek poet, 7th century, reputed author of the Little Iliad (continuation of Homer).

B. One of the nymphs on guard in the garden of the golden apples.

C. Pertaining to a wife.

D. City of Dante's death in 1321.

E. Sinless.

F. Wife of Frederick the Great of Prussia.

G. To waver, fall back, as in line of battle.

H. To pay up or contribute money, usually with *up* (Dial. U. S.)

I. Giraffelike animal discovered in the deep forests of the Belgian Congo, 1900.

J. Pianist and composer (1818-91) born in London of Fr. father and Eng. mother.

K. An auditory or spoken word or phrase as distinguished from a written one.

L. Held, bound, or fixed securely.

M. The part deepest within.

N. Lively; gay; bright.

O. The Mount on which the Ark rested after the Flood (Bib.)

P. A placing, depositing, or coming to rest.

Q. An affair of chance.

R. Unfriendly (comp.)

S. A female spirit foretelling death (Ir. and Scotch folklore).

T. Room for pitchers, linen, etc., in large or royal household.

U. To turn completely about in position or direction.

V. Legal or rightful power.

W. Donor of the Stadium to the College of the City of New York.

X. To instill; inhale.

WORDS

43 109 18 137 20 98 104

79 129 119 68 162 76 160 46

66 134 128 58 70 94 7

180 136 80 40 5 56 102

36 164 22 21 171 154 82 95 49

163 122 115 67 54 97 159 19 138

130 135 3 111

39 84 106 183 100 178

27 71 38 42 17

69 179 107 145 151 175 28

55 96 63 174 166 108 50 148 60

169 24 10 78 2

30 14 85 173 4 124 150 186 114

15 184 152 32 113 91

13 23 6 87 133 61

132 105 86 75 139 126 47 161

29 41 144 117 1 181 103

11 172 156 110 57 116 92 25 34 52 89

125 165 153 158 62 81 72

155 101 142 74 64

33 90 8 112 168 121 131

73 123 185 83 140 51 147 176 35

12 59 45 170 93 157 177 143

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